



GOVERNMENT OF GUAM
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIPATTAMENTON SALUT PUPBLEKO YAN SETBISION SUSIAT



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TB Screening Continues at GMH for Contacts to Active TB Case

The staff at the Guam Memorial Hospital (GMH) continue to screen babies and their parents identified as contacts to the active case of TB diagnosed in a GMH employee who worked in the Nursery. Of the 317 babies exposed during the period of April 1, 2017 to August 8, 2017, 207 (65.3%) have been screened. No evidence of TB has been detected in any of the babies or the 120 parents screened to date.

Efforts were made by GMH staff to contact all the families of the babies based on telephone numbers listed on their medical records. Because many of the telephone numbers were no longer in service, the staff at the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) TB Program mailed out notification letters to families who could not be contacted by telephone.

Parents, whose babies have already been screened, were instructed to do the following:

1. To give their baby Isoniazid (INH) medication, as prescribed by the pediatrician, until their baby gets a TB skin test at six (6) months of age.
2. To refill their baby's medication before it runs out. For medication refills, to please call the GMH Pharmacy at 647-2440, 647-2255, or 647-2347, Monday to Friday from 8 am - 5 pm.
3. To call their baby's primary pediatrician or to call the Northern Region Community Health Center at 635-4410 or 635-7400 in one month's time for a follow-up appointment to monitor for signs or symptoms of TB disease.
4. To have their baby get a TB skin test when the baby reaches six (6) months of age.
 - If the PPD skin test result is negative, then treatment can be stopped.
 - If the PPD skin test is positive, continue taking INH for a total of nine (9) months.

Several parents who have private health insurance have voiced concerns about being charged a co-payment or deductible when their baby is seen monthly to monitor for signs or symptoms of TB disease until cleared, which is an unfortunate barrier. DPHSS will request insurance carriers to waive the co-payment or deductible specific to the GMH TB exposure of the identified babies.

Many individuals continue to have concerns regarding the risk of getting TB. *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacteria causing tuberculosis, is carried through the air in infectious droplet nuclei too small for the naked eye (small air-borne particles less than 5 microns in size) which is produced when persons with tuberculosis of the lung or larynx sneeze, cough, speak or sing. People cannot get infected with TB bacteria through handshakes, sitting on toilet seats, or sharing dishes and utensils with someone who has TB disease.

Children are less likely to spread TB bacteria to others. This is because TB disease most commonly seen in children is usually less infectious than TB disease in adults. Additionally, their cough isn't strong enough to spread the droplets into the air.

Signs and symptoms of active TB in an infant include:

- Cough;
- Feelings of sickness or weakness, lethargy, and/or reduced playfulness;
- Weight loss or failure to thrive;
- Fever; and/or
- Night sweats.

Please call DPHSS at 735-7154/7145/7131 for more information or to find out if your baby was listed as a TB contact. Information about TB is available at www.cdc.gov/tb.



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