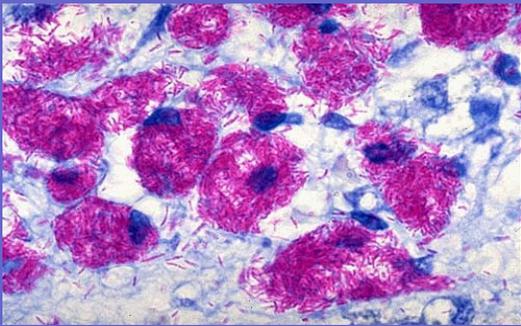


Contact Information

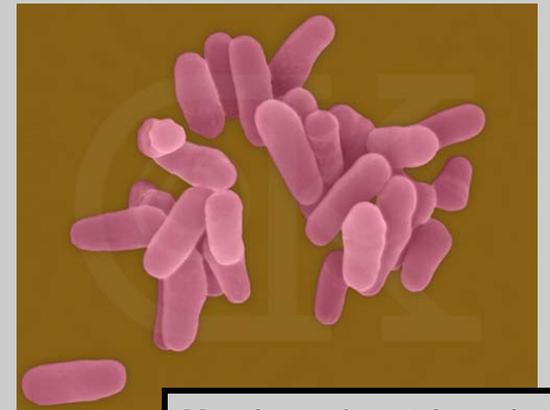
To obtain a TB specimen Packaging and Shipping Kit contact:
WAPHL Mailroom
206-418-5579



Department of Health
Public Health Laboratories
1610 NE 150th Street
Shoreline, WA 98155



Mycobacterium Testing at the Public Health Laboratories



Mycobacterium tuberculosis

PUBLIC HEALTH
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HEALTHIER WASHINGTON

Mycobacterium Testing at the Public Health Laboratories



Mycobacterium tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is spread through the air by inhaling *Mycobacterium* bacteria. These bacteria are propelled into the air when infectious people cough, spit, talk or sneeze. Left untreated, a person with active TB can infect on average of 10–15 people every year.

In recent years, tuberculosis control efforts have been complicated by the emergence of multidrug-resistant strains of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, some of which are resistant to all first-line antituberculosis drugs.

Tuberculosis in the lungs may result in fever, a productive cough, weight loss and night sweats. Usually the symptoms have been present for several weeks to even a few months before the patient is diagnosed.

The Public health Laboratory routinely receives around 3000 TB samples per year that are submitted by public health agencies, hospitals and physician offices.

The initial step involves the evaluation of sputum or other samples for the presence of mycobacterium. Their presence in sputum (or bronchial and tracheal aspirates) can be confirmed by using molecular probes that form RNA:DNA hybrids that are then detected via chemiluminescence.

The next step requires culturing the organism in order to determine the exact species. Both biochemical analyses and molecular probes can be used to determine the species. This is followed by drug susceptibility testing on confirmed isolates in order to aide in the treatment of the disease.

More extensive drug susceptibility profiles are performed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



**Washington Public Health
Laboratories
Mycobacteriology Unit
1610 NE 150th Street
Shoreline, WA 98155**



**Public Health Laboratories
Phone: 206-418-5400
Fax: 206-418-5445**