

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Suspected Tuberculosis Case in Pinellas County School**

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) is investigating a suspected case of tuberculosis (TB) in a 17-year-old student at a Pinellas County school.

DOH-Pinellas staff is testing close contacts since TB is spread through the air when people who have an active TB infection cough, sneeze or transmit respiratory fluids. TB spreads slowly, so additional tests by DOH-Pinellas will follow in 8 to 10 weeks.

TB is a disease caused by bacteria that mainly infects the lungs, although it can also affect other organs. With proper care, most cases can be treated with a course of antibiotics. Left untreated, TB can persist for years and be fatal. The rate of tuberculosis varies by geography: In Asian and African nations, rates are much higher than in developed countries.

In 2014, there were 25 reported cases of TB in the county. In February, the Florida Department of Health announced historic lows for the incidence of TB statewide. For four consecutive years, annual cases of active TB have declined by nearly 29 percent.

The symptoms of TB may include:

- A cough lasting three or more weeks that may produce discolored or bloody sputum
- Unintended weight loss
- Fatigue
- Slight fever
- Night sweats
- Chills
- Loss of appetite
- Pain with breathing or coughing

Information for parents about the TB investigation (in English and Spanish) is posted at [www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com).

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