

# Health Advisory

## For MSU students, faculty and staff traveling to **SOUTH AFRICA**

The Office of Study Abroad and the University Physician's Office at Michigan State University **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** all MSU students, staff, and faculty traveling to South Africa see a qualified health care professional to discuss associated risks of being exposed to **Extensively Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (XDR-TB)**. This is especially important to those with compromised immune systems.

Extensively Drug Resistant Tuberculosis, or XDR-TB, is a very serious form of tuberculosis (a bacterial infection primarily affecting the lungs). Standard strains of TB are treatable with antibiotics, but treatment options for XDR-TB are severely limited.

Participants who have applied to programs with activities in specific areas of South Africa will be contacted by the Office of Study Abroad for required pre-departure testing for TB, as well as post-testing upon return to the United States.

For further information e-mail the Office of Study Abroad at [studyabroad@osa.msu.edu](mailto:studyabroad@osa.msu.edu) or the University Physician's Office at [uphys@msu.edu](mailto:uphys@msu.edu).

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about XDR-TB

#### Where does XDR-TB occur?

XDR-TB occurs worldwide, but recent outbreaks in South Africa have raised concern, particularly in KwaZulu Natal Province, bordering the Indian Ocean. Both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) consider XDR-TB to be rare, but there is increasing concern about rates of infection in certain parts of the world, particularly sub-Saharan Africa.



#### How do people become infected with XDR-TB?

XDR-TB, like regular TB, is contagious. Persons who are ill with pulmonary TB can spread the disease by coughing, sneezing, or even talking, because this can put TB particles into the air.

#### What are conditions that increase the risk for XDR-TB?

The spread of TB bacteria depends on many factors, such as the number and concentration of people in any one place together. Frequent and consistent amounts of time spent in crowded, poorly ventilated areas where there is a high incidence of regular TB may increase the possibility of exposure.

#### Who is most at risk for contracting XDR-TB?

People who are most at risk (if they come into contact with someone with XDR-TB) are those with compromised immune systems, such as those with HIV infection, those on immunosuppressive medications, or those having other diseases which weaken one's ability to fight disease.

#### Should I be worried about flying?

Probably not. Air travel itself carries only very minimal risks of infection with TB of any kind.

#### How do I learn more?

If you have not already done so, make an appointment at the MSU Travel Clinic (517) 353-3161 or the Ingham Country Health Department Immunization Center (517) 887-4316, or see your family physician. Take this flyer with you.

To read more about XDR-TB, the MSU University Physician recommends the following Web sites:

- World Health Organization - <http://www.who.int/tb/challenges/xdr/en/index.html>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/xdrtb/default.htm>

#### If I wanted to be tested for TB, what are my options?

You can go to your family physician, a county health department, the MSU Travel Clinic (\$15) or the allergy/immunization clinic at the Olin Health Center (\$25) for TB testing.

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

**UPhys.**  
University Physician's Office

