

Tuberculosis (TB) in San Diego County: By the Numbers

What Is Tuberculosis?

Active tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB usually affects the lungs and spreads through the air when a person sick with TB coughs. Not everyone infected with the bacteria becomes sick. Those who have been infected, but are not sick, have latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Persons with LTBI can become sick with active TB in the future if they are not treated.

Overview

- In 2025, San Diego County reported 265 new active TB diagnoses, a 7% increase compared to 247 in 2024 (Table 1).
- During 2015-2019, the average annual number of newly reported TB diagnoses was 244. The annual total decreased to 193 in 2020, likely due to multiple pandemic related factors. Since then, there have been 5 consecutive years of increases in new active TB diagnoses, reaching the highest level in over a decade.
- In 2025, TB incidence in San Diego County was 8.0 new active TB diagnoses per 100,000 persons. The South and Central regions of the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency are disproportionately impacted with the highest numbers of people diagnosed with active TB.
- An estimated 85% of new active TB diagnoses are due to progression of long-standing LTBI to active TB.
- About 175,000 San Diegans have LTBI, which can progress to active TB without treatment.

Table 1. Number and incidence of new active TB diagnoses, San Diego County, 2016-2025

YEAR	COUNT	RATE (per 100,000 persons)
2016	258	7.9
2017	237	7.2
2018	226	6.8
2019	264	7.9
2020	193	5.8
2021	201	6.1
2022	208	6.3
2023	241	7.3
2024	247	7.5
2025	265	8.0

New Active TB Diagnoses: 2025 by the Numbers

Age

- The median age of people with active TB was 51 and ranged from 1 to 96 years old.
- Since 2013, five or fewer children less than 5 years old have been diagnosed with active TB annually, a sustained improvement from the annual average of 15 children per year from 2002-2006. TB in very young children is of concern because it often represents recent transmission of infection from adults to children.
- The highest rates occurred in the oldest age group, persons aged 65 years and older (29% of all people with active TB).

Table 2. Proportion of new TB diagnoses by birth country, San Diego County, 2025

COUNTRY	PERCENT
Mexico	30%
United States	28%
Philippines	15%
Vietnam	9%
Other	18%

Table 3. TB incidence by birth country, San Diego County, 2021-2025 (Rates calculated with 2021-2024 American Community Survey Population Data)

BIRTH COUNTRY	RATE (per 100,000 persons)
United States	2.8
Outside the U.S.	21.2
Mexico	22.3
Philippines	41.7
Vietnam	35.9

Race/Ethnicity

- Among people with TB the majority of diagnoses occurred in Hispanics (55% [145]) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (34% [89]). Non-Hispanic Blacks accounted for <5% (<12) and non-Hispanic Whites, <8% (<25).
- Of the 145 Hispanic people diagnosed with active TB with a reported birth country, more than half (89) were born outside the U.S.
- Rates among Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics were more than 8 times that of non-Hispanic Whites.

Birth Country

- The majority (72%) of TB diagnoses were in persons who were born outside the U.S. (Table 2).
- Of the 74 people with active TB born in the U.S., 76% (56) were Hispanic.
- The TB rate among persons born outside the U.S. was more than 7 times higher than the rate among U.S.-born persons and varied by birth country (Table 3).

TB Risk Factors

- The most common medical risk factor was diabetes (29% of people with active TB). 12% of people with active TB were living with HIV at the time of diagnosis.
- Other risk factors reported included experiencing homelessness in the past year (13%), drug use in the past year (17%), and detention at diagnosis (8%).

Drug Resistance

- Among the 203 people with culture-proven TB with drug susceptibility results, 26 (13%) had isolates resistant to at least isoniazid, and 2 (1%) had multidrug-resistant TB (MDR TB), defined as resistance to at least isoniazid and rifampin.
- Since 1999, a total of 76 people were diagnosed with MDR TB in San Diego and one (in 2024) was extensively drug-resistant (XDR), defined as MDR TB with resistance to at least one fluoroquinolone and one injectable, or as of 2022, MDR TB with resistance to at least one fluoroquinolone and bedaquiline or linezolid.

TB due to *Mycobacterium bovis*

- Disease due to *M. bovis*, also known as bovine tuberculosis, is usually contracted through the consumption of unpasteurized dairy products. Person-to-person transmission is also believed to occur.
- Among the 197 people with culture-proven TB in 2025 with genotyping results, 10% (19 people) had disease from *Mycobacterium bovis*. Of the 63 people with culture-proven TB born in Mexico, 9 (14%) had *M. bovis*.