

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

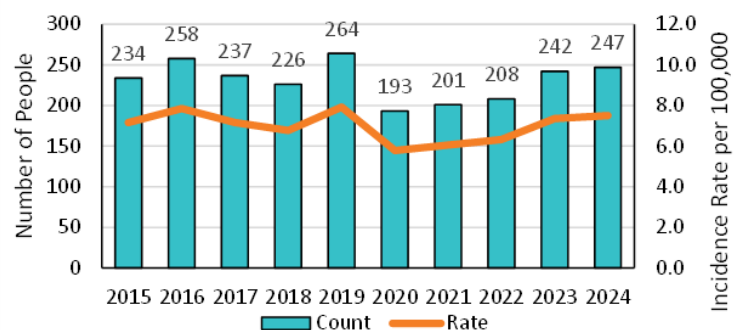
What Is Tuberculosis?

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 2024, a total of 247 people received a new diagnosis of active TB* in San Diego County, a 2% increase compared to 242 in 2023 (Figure 1). This marks the fourth consecutive year of rising TB diagnoses since 2021.
- During 2015-2019, the average annual number of people reported with TB was 244. The annual total decreased to 193 in 2020, likely due to multiple pandemic related factors. After smaller increases in 2021 and 2022, the total returned to the pre-pandemic level in 2023 and 2024.
- In 2024, TB incidence in San Diego County was 7.5 per 100,000 persons. The highest incidence occurs in the South and Central regions of the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (Figure 2).
- An estimated 85% of active TB is due to progression of LTBI to active TB disease.
- About 175,000 San Diegans have LTBI, which can progress to active TB without treatment.

Figure 1. Number and incidence of new active TB diagnoses, San Diego County, 2015-2024



Active TB: 2024 by the Numbers

Age

- The median age of people with TB was 44 and ranged from <1 to 92 years old.
- Since 2013, five or fewer children less than 5 years old developed TB annually, a sustained improvement from the annual average of 15 children with TB annually 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 of TB occurred in the oldest age group, persons aged 65 years and older (27% of all reported TB).

Figure 2. Active TB incidence by zip code, San Diego County, 2019-2023

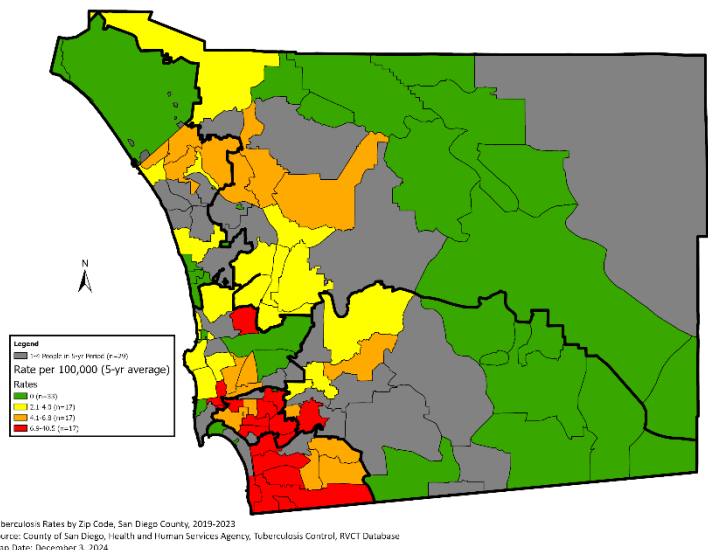




Figure 3. Proportion of people with TB by birth country, San Diego County, 2024

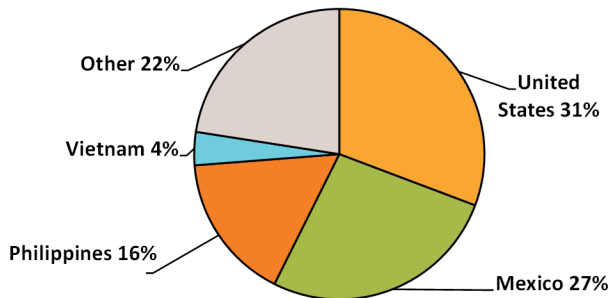
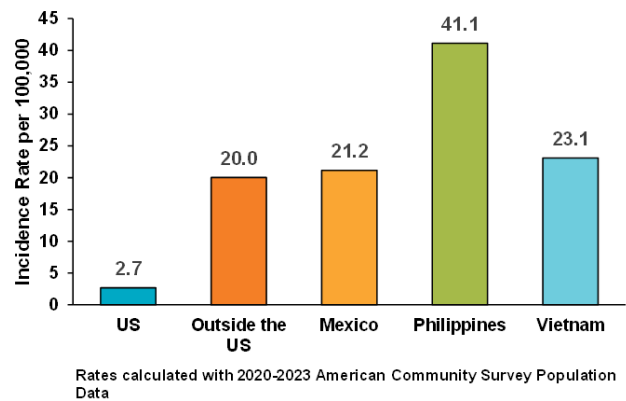


Figure 4. TB incidence by birth country, San Diego County, 2020-2024



Race/Ethnicity

- The highest proportion of people diagnosed with TB were Hispanic (58%, 143 people) and Asian/Pacific Islander (28%, 69 people). TB was diagnosed less frequently among non-Hispanic Whites (9%, 22 people) and non-Hispanic Blacks (5%, 12 people).
- Rates among Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics were more than 8 times that of non-Hispanic Whites.

Birth Country

- TB was more frequently diagnosed in persons who were born outside the U.S. (Figure 3).
- Among the 75 people born in the United States diagnosed with TB, 79% 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 (Figure 4).

TB Risk Factors

- The most common medical risk factor was diabetes (28% of people with TB), and 7% of people with TB had HIV co-infection, the strongest medical risk factor for progression to active TB disease among people with LTBI.
- People experiencing homelessness in the past year (15% of people with TB), people with drug use in the past year (19% of people with TB), and people incarcerated or in detention at diagnosis (7% of people with TB) were all disproportionately impacted by TB.

Drug Resistance

- Among the 201 persons with culture-proven disease with drug susceptibility results, 19 (9%) had isolates resistant to at least isoniazid, and 3 (1%) had multidrug-resistant TB (MDR TB), defined as resistance to at least isoniazid and rifampin.
- Since 1999, a total of 74 people were diagnosed with MDR TB in San Diego and one person (in 2024) had extensively drug-resistant (XDR) TB, 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*

- Among the 200 persons with culture-proven disease in 2024 with genotyping results, 10% (20 people) had disease from *Mycobacterium bovis*. *M. bovis* was more common among the 57 people with culture-proven disease who were born in Mexico, occurring in 11 people (19% of those born in Mexico).
- 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.