

Edison College confirms case of tuberculosis

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5:06 P.M. — An Edison State College student has contracted tuberculosis, officials confirmed Thursday, and all students and faculty who came into contact with her must undergo mandatory testing next week.

Many people with the bacterial infection do not show symptoms, which can include persistent coughing, fever, weight loss, fatigue and night sweats. TB once was a leading cause of death in the U.S., but no longer is considered a serious health threat.

“TB is spread by droplets through coughing or sneezing, but it’s not as contagious as influenza or the common cold,” said Dr. Judith Hartner, director of the Lee County Health Department.

In 2008, there were 32 confirmed cases of TB in Lee County. Hartner said 2009 data is not yet compiled.

Edison would not identify the affected individual or confirm her major or spring classes, citing federal privacy laws. The college already has notified every student and instructor that must undergo mandatory testing next week.

“Unless they got a phone call or message from Edison, they weren’t in contact with this person,” said Catherine Bergerson, communications and marketing director.