

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening Recommendations for Retirement Home Residents

The Retirement Homes Act, 2010 requires screening of residents for tuberculosis prior to admission.

According to the Retirement Homes Act, 2010, Ontario Regulation 166/11, Section 27 (8 b), the licensee shall ensure that the following screening measures are in place: *“The licensee of a retirement home shall ensure that each resident is screened for tuberculosis within 14 days of commencing residency in the home, unless the resident has been screened not more than 90 days before commencing residency and the documented results of the screening are available to the licensee.”*

“Screening” has not been defined in the Act.

Based on the Act and the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards, 7th edition (2013) North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (NBPSDHU) recommends the following in order to screen residents for TB disease prior to admission to the Retirement Home:

1. **Chest x-ray (>65 years old):** A chest x-ray (posterior-anterior and lateral) taken within 90 days prior to admission to the facility. If the x-ray was not done within the 90 days prior to admission, it should be taken within 14 days of admission. A copy of the x-ray report must be provided to the home.
2. **Medical assessment:** A physical assessment and symptom review by a physician/nurse practitioner to rule out active pulmonary TB should be done within 90 days prior to admission, or within 14 days of admission, to ensure that signs and symptoms of active TB are absent.

If signs and symptoms and/or the chest x-ray indicate potential active pulmonary disease, the resident should not be admitted until three sputum samples are taken at least one hour apart and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for testing (Acid Fast Bacilli and Culture) and the results are negative. It can take up to eight weeks for a final culture report.

3. **TST (≤65 years old only):** In addition a medical assessment for residents ≤65 years of age who are previously skin test negative or unknown, a 2-step tuberculin skin test (TST) is recommended. If resident has a previously documented 2-step, only a one-step TST is necessary.

A TST is not recommended for residents who are >65 years of age, or those who have had a previously positive TST. For residents with a prior TST result, the latest result should be recorded in millimetres (mm), including the date the TST was administered.

4. **Transfers:** Prior to transfer from another facility, a physical assessment and symptom review of the resident, by a physician/nurse practitioner to rule out active pulmonary TB is recommended. In addition, the chest x-ray previously done upon admission or any more recent radiology should be reviewed. If there is any indication of possible active TB, a repeat chest x-ray, sputum testing and any other necessary investigations should be done to rule out active pulmonary TB disease before the resident is transferred.

If you have any questions regarding TB screening, please contact the Communicable Disease Control Program at: 705-474-1400 ext.5229 or toll free at 1-800-563-2808.

Reference: Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) of the Canadian Lung Association (CLA); Public Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2013). *Canadian Tuberculosis Standards*, 7th edition. Retrieved from: <http://www.respiratoryguidelines.ca/tb-standards-2013>.

“Retirement Home Letter” by Peel Public Health, March, 2013. Adapted with permission.

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