

Home Isolation for Tuberculosis

What is it?

- Tuberculosis (TB) of the lungs or throat is contagious and is spread from person to person through the air when a person with TB coughs, sneezes, talks, laughs or sings. TB is not spread by sharing utensils, plates, cups, clothing, bed linen, furniture, toilets or by shaking hands.

Home Isolation

- Home isolation means a person who has been diagnosed with active TB disease must stay at home and not go out to public places in order to prevent spreading TB bacteria to others.
- Home isolation will also be required if a person is suspected of having TB and is waiting for test results.
- A person on home isolation must **not** go to work, school, places of worship, restaurants, movies, grocery stores, shopping malls or any other indoor public place.
- A person on home isolation must not ride on buses, subways, trains, airplanes or any other form of public transportation.
- If absolutely necessary, a taxi can be used to attend needed healthcare appointments and only if the person with TB is wearing a mask. Your public health nurse can provide you with masks to use.
- No visitors are allowed in the home except for health care workers.

How to Protect Your Family

- Sleep in your own room separate from other people.
- Open your windows to let the TB germs out.
- No children under the age of 5 or persons with a weak immune system should be present in the home at any time.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Always wear a mask when you are around people in your home.

How to Protect Other People

- Stay home and do not have visitors.
- Stay away from public places.

- You may go outside for short walks around your neighbourhood without wearing a mask but stay away from other people.
- Wear a surgical mask when you go for a laboratory test, x-ray or to see your doctor.
- If you have to be picked up by an ambulance, wear a mask and inform the paramedics and the hospital emergency department that you have TB.

How long will I need to be on home isolation?

- **Suspected TB:** Home isolation will be stopped when test results have ruled out TB or your health care provider no longer suspects TB and/or made a different diagnosis.
- **Confirmed TB disease:** The length of home isolation will depend on how well your body responds to the TB medication. This is based on the results of sputum tests, x-rays and if your symptoms go away. Your doctor or public health nurse will let you know when you are no longer contagious and may resume normal activities.

For further information, please contact the Communicable Disease Control Program staff at 705-474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808, ext 2229.

References:

Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) of the Canadian Lung Association (CLA); Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). (2014). Canadian Tuberculosis Standards. 7th edition.

Exhibit for WI-CDC-020 – 2016-08-22