

Recommendations for Tuberculosis (TB) Screening in Long Term Care and Retirement Homes

Residents of long-term care facilities and health care workers are at increased risk of TB exposure and latent TB infection.

What are the recommendations for employees and volunteers? A 2-step tuberculin skin test (TST) within 6 months before starting work or within 14 days of starting work. Refer to Canadian TB Standards for direction on TST administration, interpretation, etc.

What are the recommendations for NEW residents?

Residents require the following:

1. history and physical examination by a physician/nurse practitioner within 90 days prior to admission or within 14 days after admission
2. symptom review for active pulmonary TB disease
 - If there are concerning findings on the review of symptoms order a chest x-ray and the collection of three sputum specimens for acid-fast bacilli (AFB) and culture at least 1 hour apart. Send these specimens to the Public Health Laboratory.

Suspected and/or confirmed cases are reportable to Public Health (705)743-1000, as per the Health Promotion and Protection Act, R.S.O., 1990.

(NOTE: Residents admitted to short term care (< 3 months) (i.e. respite care) should receive an assessment and symptom review by a physician/nurse practitioner to rule out active TB within 90 days prior to admission/on admission or within 14 days after admission. If symptom review indicates active pulmonary TB disease, a chest x-ray must be obtained and the resident should not be admitted until active TB is ruled out.)

What if active TB is suspected (based on information collected) and client is not yet admitted?

1. Do not admit into facility
2. Notify the Peterborough Public Health (705)743-1000

What if active TB is suspected (based on information collected) and client has been admitted?

1. Isolate using airborne precautions
2. Obtain a chest x-ray
3. Collect 3 sputum specimens (1 hour apart) using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and send to the Public Health Laboratory
4. Notify the Peterborough Public Health (705)743-1000 ext. 131.

What if the TST result (induration) is ≥ 10 mm?

1. Refer to Canadian TB Standards
2. Notify the Public Health (705)743-1000 if results are positive as per Canadian TB Standards criteria for interpretation

Is annual screening required for employees or residents? Annual TB testing and/or chest x-rays are not recommended.

Who should I call if I have questions? Call Infectious Disease Nurses at (705)743-1000, ext. 131.

Reference: Canadian Tuberculosis Standards, 2022

Active Tuberculosis Screening Checklist for Clinicians

Symptoms	Yes	No	Comments
cough greater than 3 weeks			
hemoptysis			
fever			
night sweats			
unintentional weight loss			
chest pain			
dyspnea			
Chest X-ray findings	Yes	No	Comments
cavities			
infiltrates			
nodules			
pleural effusion			
hilar or mediastinal lymphadenopathy			
changes in apices of lung			
densities			
volume loss			
fibrosis			
granulomas			