

TB Contact Investigations

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a TB contact?

TB contacts are people who have had close, long and repeated contact with someone with active TB. People with active TB may be able to spread TB to others if the TB is in their lungs or airways. This type of TB may be called infectious TB because it can be spread to other people.

What is a TB contact investigation?

A TB contact investigation is a way to find out if people have been infected with TB as a result of spending time with someone with infectious TB. It is also a good way to find people that may have developed active TB as a result of the contact.

TB Prevention and Control Saskatchewan is notified of all persons with active TB in the province. Local healthcare providers, public health programs and TB Prevention and Control Saskatchewan work together during the investigation to make sure each contact is notified, screened and tested for TB.

Is it easy to become infected with TB?

It is not easy to become infected with TB. Close, long and repeated contact with someone with infectious TB is usually needed.

TB is usually spread to people that spend time daily or almost daily with the person with infectious TB such as household members, roommates, friends, coworkers, or classmates.

People infected with TB usually have a positive TB skin test but they do not feel sick and cannot spread TB to others.

Most contacts do not become infected. Most people that become infected with TB never develop active TB and do not become sick. Despite this, it is still very important for contacts to be screened and tested for TB.

What happens during a contact investigation?

Contacts are first notified by a Nurse clinician from TB Prevention and Control, a NITHA TB nurse or local health clinic. This often occurs by phone, letter or may be done in person. Screening and testing for TB is then recommended and will be arranged.

Who does the screening?

A community health nurse or a NITHA TB nurse will do the screening.



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Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

What will happen during the screening?

- You will be asked if you have symptoms of active TB. People with active TB may spread TB to others.
- You will be asked about medicine you are taking and health conditions you may have. Certain health conditions and medicine can increase your chance of becoming sick with active TB in the future if you are infected with TB.
- You may be given a TB skin test. This is a simple and safe test to find out if you have been infected with TB. You will not need this test if you had a positive skin test documented in the past.

What will happen if my skin test is positive or I have symptoms of active TB?

You may need to see the TB doctor. TB Prevention and Control Saskatchewan will make an appointment for you. Other tests may be needed such as a chest x-ray.

Can I continue with my usual activities if I am a contact?

Yes. It is safe to continue your usual activities such as going to work or school. Friends and family members of contacts are not at risk of being infected.

What can I do if I am a contact?

- It is important for you to be screened and tested for TB.
- It is safe for you to continue your usual activities.
- If an appointment is made for you to see the TB doctor – go to your appointment.
- If you are given treatment for TB – take all of your medicine as directed.
- Know the symptoms of active TB. If you or someone you know has symptoms, speak with your doctor or nurse.
- Remember...TB can be prevented, antibiotics are available to treat TB and TB can be cured.

Treatment for Active TB and Latent TB infection are offered by specially trained TB Program workers in your community. Please contact NITHA TB program for more information:
(306) 953-5000

