



March 24 is World Tuberculosis Day, a day to increase awareness about tuberculosis (TB) in Canada and around the world. The theme for World TB Day 2023 is “**YES! We Can End TB**” and should be championed as the ‘Year of Hope’ to get full support, attention, and energy towards the elimination of TB by 2030.

TB can be prevented and cured. However, many Indigenous communities continue to have higher rates of TB than in other Canadian communities.

TB in Saskatchewan

- In 2022*, TB rates among First Nations were **eight** times higher than the provincial rate.
- Of the active TB cases reported in Saskatchewan in 2022*, **51%** were discovered in First Nations communities. Northern Saskatchewan First Nations communities continues to have higher burden of disease.
- Compared to 2020, there has been a **400%** increase in hospitalization in 2022* among TB cases from First Nations communities in Saskatchewan.
- In 2022* there was a **74%** increase in pediatric TB cases in SK First Nations communities, compared to 2021. **45%** of the TB cases reported in 2022* were in clients under the age of 15 years.
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has been providing ongoing public health surge capacities, including epidemiological services, Medical Health Officer (MHO), and nursing, to Northern Inter- Tribal Health Authority (NITHA) and the outbreak communities.
- TB remains highly stigmatized in Canada. ISC and NITHA work jointly to keep clients in their home community for testing and treatment as much as possible.

Everyone Has a Role to Play. Know the Signs.

We have seen different respiratory illnesses over the past three years. Not every cough is the same. **Common symptoms of TB are:**

- A cough lasting two to three weeks or more
- Coughing up phlegm or blood
- Fever
- Chills
- Night sweats
- Feeling tired or prolonged fatigue
- Loss of appetite and unexplained weight loss or
- Shortness of breath and chest pain.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, visit your local health centre, tell your health care provider about your symptoms, and/or ask about TB testing.

YES! We Can End TB

Globally, TB mortality rates have increased for the second year in row. The rates of new TB cases have also increased for the first time in more than a decade. Despite this, we have witnessed incredible efforts by several countries to overcome the heavy impact of COVID-19 on their national TB response. We also see that there is an incredible energy in bringing to the forefront and ensuring access to new diagnostics, new treatment and preventive regimens, new recommendations, and guidelines. We see how the voice of people affected by TB is stronger and stronger as they gain a central role in TB response in many countries.

We know that we can end TB!

ISC and NITHA embrace this World TB Day 2023 theme together, by collaborating with families, communities, provinces and territories, stakeholders, researchers and other experts to work towards Canada's goal to eliminate TB by 2030. Prioritizing TB elimination in Saskatchewan Indigenous communities begins with setting local and regional elimination targets together.

Respectfully,



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