

11/30/2023

**NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

Provider Advisory: Tuberculosis testing for people who were previously incarcerated

The Washington State Department of Health has issued a provider advisory regarding tuberculosis testing for people who were previously incarcerated

Background:

The Washington State Department of Health and Local Health Jurisdictions are continuing to work through an outbreak investigation starting in July of 2021. Over 2900 potentially exposed contacts were identified and over 800 exposed individuals were released prior to their exposure being identified, or they declined testing in prison.

Please see the attached release from the Washington State Department of Health

Legal Reporting Requirements:

Health care providers and Health care facilities: TB disease (confirmed or highly suspicious, i.e., initiation of empiric treatment) notifiable to local health jurisdiction (LHJ) within 24 hours.

Laboratories: Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex (MTC) (Tuberculosis) culture, Nucleic acid amplification detection (NAT or NAAT), or drug susceptibilities (molecular and culture based) notifiable to Department of Health within 2 business days; submission required - Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex positive isolate (earliest available isolate for the patient), within 2 business days.

THANK YOU FOR REPORTING

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day): Reporting a Notifiable Condition (thurstoncountywa.gov)	Phone: 360-786-5470 Fax: 360-867-2601
Day time immediately reportable conditions - Calls are answered during business hours Monday -Friday 8am -5pm (excluding holidays) and routed to the appropriate communicable disease team member.	Phone: 360-867-2610 Secure eFax: 1-833-418-1916
After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency	Call 1-800-986-9050
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is immediately notifiable	1-877-539-4344

Communicable Disease Updates are posted online at: [Communicable Disease Updates \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](http://thurstoncountywa.gov)



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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Provider advisory: tuberculosis testing for people who were previously incarcerated

November 27, 2023

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH), Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC), and local health jurisdictions continue to work to address a large tuberculosis (TB) outbreak within the state prison system. Since July 2021, 28 people have been diagnosed with active TB; during the outbreak investigation, DOH and DOC identified over 2900 potentially exposed contacts.

Over 800 exposed individuals were released from prison prior to their exposure being identified or declined testing while in prison. While local health jurisdictions have worked to notify these individuals of their exposure and offer testing, many individuals have not been successfully notified or tested. Thus, we are asking healthcare providers in Washington to help ensure that all previously incarcerated people are offered TB testing.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPTF) recommends TB screening testing for individuals at increased risk, including people who were born in, or have lived in, countries with high TB prevalence, as well as people who live in, or have lived in, high-risk congregate settings (e.g., homeless shelters or correctional facilities). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends TB screening testing for people who work in correctional facilities.

Washington State healthcare providers are requested to:

- 1. Ask patients about risk factors for TB exposure (country of birth, history of living in a country with high TB prevalence, history of living or working in a correctional facility, history of living in a homeless shelter).**
- 2. Offer TB screening testing to patients at increased risk of TB (unless they have a known history of TB infection or disease). Depending on test availability and the clinical situation, screening testing can be performed using tuberculin skin testing (TST) or interferon gamma release assays (IGRA).**
- 3. Patients who test positive should receive a clinical evaluation and chest X-ray to rule out active TB disease. If active TB disease is ruled out, initiate treatment for latent TB infection if clinically appropriate. If active TB disease is suspected or diagnosed, contact your local health jurisdiction.**

Healthcare providers can contact their local health jurisdiction with questions about TB testing and treatment (<https://doh.wa.gov/about-us/washingtons-public-health-system/washington-state-local-health-jurisdictions>).

Additional resources

Screening for Latent Tuberculosis Infection in Adults: US Preventive Services Task Force

Recommendation Statement: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2804319>

Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in Correctional and Detention Facilities: Recommendations from

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5509a1.htm>

CDC guidance on TB diagnosis: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/diagnosingltbi.htm>

CDC guidance on treatment of latent TB infection: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/treatment/ltbi.htm>