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March 22, 2024

MARCH 24 IS WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY: ‘YES! WE CAN END TB’

Each year, World Tuberculosis (TB) day is commemorated on March 24th to raise awareness about the health, social, and economic consequences of TB. World TB Day this year continues with the theme “Yes! We can end TB”. TB is still one of the world’s deadliest diseases and recent years have seen a worrying increase in drug-resistant TB⁴.

Local Tuberculosis Statistics, 2023

Episode Type	Number of cases within SWPH (change from 2022)
<u>Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI)</u>	39 (↑10)
<u>Active Tuberculosis Disease (TB)</u>	4 (no change)
<u>Non-TB Mycobacterial Infections (NTM)</u>	3 (↑2)
<u>TB Immigration Medical Surveillance (IMS)</u>	27 (↑7)

*There has been an increase in TB Immigration Medical Surveillance and tuberculosis infection reports from previous years.

*3 cases of active TB were diagnosed with TB lymphadenitis.

Tuberculosis Immigration Medical Surveillance (IMS)

Individuals applying for a Canadian visa, permanent residency, refugee status, or citizenship have an Immigration Medical Exam (IME) to rule out active pulmonary TB disease prior to arriving in Canada². If active pulmonary TB disease is ruled out but there is evidence of inactive TB, the individual is required to contact their local board of health for IMS. Individuals are required to complete IMS if any of the following criteria are noted on their IME²:

- Previously treated TB.
- Inactive pulmonary TB on chest x-ray (after investigations to exclude active pulmonary TB have been done).
- Extrapulmonary tuberculosis.
- Household/close contacts of persons with active pulmonary TB within the previous five years.
- Individuals with a reactive pre-landing IGRA or TST who are at high risk for TB reactivation (chronic kidney disease, HIV, history of certain head and neck cancers, solid organ or bone marrow transplant recipients who are on immunosuppressive therapy).

Individuals who are referred for IMS must be assessed by a health care provider to rule out active pulmonary TB. This assessment includes at a minimum²:

1. A physical exam, including a TB symptom check, and a detailed health history (including assessment for previous TB diagnosis/treatment and relevant risk factors).
2. Diagnostic testing (chest x-ray, sputum smear microscopy and culture) deemed necessary by the physician/health care provider to effectively rule out active TB).

Individuals requiring IMS will be given a report form from the health unit to help facilitate this assessment.

Individuals reporting for IMS are eligible for TB infection testing. As per Chapter 14, section 2.3.1, of the [Canadian Tuberculosis Standards 8th Edition](#), individuals should be recommended to complete TB infection testing based on their individual activation risk profile and the incidence of TB in their country of origin. The decision to offer TB infection testing should consider the balance of benefits and risks to the patient¹.

Long-term care and Retirement Homes

Updated recommendations for TB screening were outlined in the [Canadian Tuberculosis Standards 8th Edition](#) and the [Tuberculosis Program Guideline, 2023](#).

Please review our new resource for TB screening in these settings – [Active Tuberculosis \(TB\) Screening in Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes – Checklist for Clinicians](#).

Reporting Requirements: Both Active TB Disease and Latent TB Infection (LTBI) are Reportable in Ontario

To report suspected or confirmed active TB cases:

- Call Southwestern Public Health at 1-800-922-0096 (8:30 a.m – 4:30 p.m.) to provide patient clinical information and demographics (name, date of birth, address, and phone number).
- Download, complete, and fax the [Tuberculosis \(TB\) Notification Form](#) to SWPH.

To report a positive TB skin test/IGRA:

- Download and complete the [Tuberculosis \(TB\) Notification Form](#).
- Fax the positive TST/IGRA result, chest x-ray, and TB Notification Form to SWPH.

Infectious Disease – St. Thomas

Southwestern Public Health
Ph: 1-800-922-0096, ext. 1232
Fax: 519-631-1682

Infectious Disease - Woodstock

Southwestern Public Health
Ph: 1-800-922-0096, ext. 3500
Fax: 519-539-6206

References

1. Canadian Tuberculosis Standard – 8th Edition. (2022). Canadian Journal of Respiratory, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine.
2. Ministry of Health. (2023). Tuberculosis Program Guideline, 2023. Toronto, ON.
3. Stop TB Partnership. (2024). World TB Day 2024. <https://www.stoptb.org/advocate-to-entdtb/world-tb-day>
4. World Health Organization. (2024). [World TB Day 2024](#).