

Tuberculosis (TB) Update

January 24, 2023

Between January 1, 2019 and October 15, 2022, Northern Health (NH) had 51 new cases of active tuberculosis (TB). Of these, 61% (31 cases) reside in the Northern Interior region, where NH is currently experiencing an active cluster. Active TB cases in this cluster are predominantly in Canadian-born Canadian citizens (31 cases) with foreign-born individuals accounting for only 39% (20 cases) of all cases. This is in sharp contrast to the rest of BC which sees the vast majority of TB cases occurring in foreign-born populations.

What can we do as health care providers?

Think TB

- Consider TB as a part of your working diagnosis when clients present with generalized symptoms such as a cough, fever, unexpected weight loss and abnormal chest x-ray
- Review risk factors of TB when taking client health history: immunocompromised individuals, history of being named as a contact to TB, limited access to care, underhoused, misuse of drugs and alcohol, congregate living settings and heavy tobacco use
- Use the [Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise \(RACE\) App](#) to consult with a specialist in Respiriology or Tuberculosis

Test

- Recommend routine TB screening for asymptomatic high-risk individuals (publicly funded TSTs at local health units) to identify latent TB
- Sputum samples remain the gold standard for diagnosing active TB. Consider collecting three sputum samples for AFB and culture

Prevent transmission

- Rapid and early diagnosis of TB
- Prompt isolation of clients with active TB
- Robust discussion with clients who have been offered latent TB treatment of the benefits of accepting preventative therapy
- IGRA testing to help diagnose latent TB infection
- Consult BCCDC TB Services for TB specific supports. Contact the Nurse Consultant Line 1-604-707-5678

Additional TB resources for health care providers

- [BCCDC Tuberculosis Manual](#)
- [BCCDC CPS Monthly Surveillance Report-October 2022](#)
- [Canadian Tuberculosis Standards 7th Edition: 2014](#)
- [Tuberculosis HealthLink BC](#)
- [RACE App](#)