

TB Screening and Testing of Health Care Personnel

last reviewed: May 16, 2019

Tuberculosis (TB) screening and testing of health care personnel is recommended as part of a TB Infection Control Plan and might be required by state regulations. For TB regulations in your area, please contact your [state or local TB control program](#).

TB screening programs should include anyone working or volunteering in healthcare settings, including:

- inpatient settings,
- outpatient settings,
- laboratories,
- emergency medical services,
- medical settings in correctional facilities,
- home-based health care and outreach settings,
- long-term care facilities, and
- clinics in homeless shelters.

All U.S. health care personnel should be screened for TB upon hire (i.e., preplacement). The local health department should be notified **immediately** if TB disease is suspected. Annual TB testing of health care personnel is **not** recommended unless there is a known exposure or ongoing transmission. [Treatment for latent TB infection](#) (LTBI) is strongly encouraged for health care personnel diagnosed with latent TB infection. Shorter treatment regimens, including once-weekly isoniazid and rifapentine for 3 months and daily rifampin for 4 months, should be used as they are more likely to be completed when compared to the traditional regimens of 6 or 9 months of isoniazid.

CDC and the National TB Controllers Association released [updated recommendations](#) for TB screening, testing, and treatment of health care personnel on May 17, 2019. These recommendations update the health care personnel screening and testing section of the 2005 CDC [Guidelines for Preventing the Transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in Health-Care Settings](#). CDC has developed [supporting resources](#) and tools including: [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and a [Baseline Individual TB Risk Assessment Formpdf icon](#)

- [Frequency of TB Screening and Testing](#)
- [TB Blood Test](#)
- [TB Skin Test: Two-Step Testing](#)

Baseline TB Screening and Testing

All U.S. health care personnel should be screened for TB upon hire (i.e., preplacement). TB screening is a process that includes:

- A baseline individual [TB risk assessmentpdf icon](#),
- [TB symptom](#) evaluation,
- A [TB test](#) (e.g., TB blood test or a TB skin test), and
- Additional evaluation for TB disease as needed.

Information from the baseline individual [TB risk assessmentpdf icon](#) should be used to interpret the results of a TB blood test or TB skin test given upon hire (i.e., preplacement). Health care personnel with a positive TB test result should receive a symptom evaluation and a chest x-ray to rule out TB disease. Additional workup may be needed based on those results.

Health care personnel with a documented history of a prior positive TB test should receive a baseline individual TB risk assessment and TB symptom screen upon hire (i.e., preplacement). A repeat TB test (e.g., TB blood test or a TB skin test) is not required.

Annual Screening, Testing, and Education

Annual TB testing of health care personnel is **not** recommended unless there is a known exposure or ongoing transmission at a healthcare facility. Health care personnel with untreated latent TB infection should receive an annual [TB symptom](#) screen. Symptoms for TB disease include any of the following: a cough lasting longer than three weeks, unexplained weight loss, night sweats or a fever, and loss of appetite.

Healthcare facilities might consider using annual TB screening for certain groups at increased occupational risk for TB exposure (e.g., pulmonologists or respiratory therapists) or in certain settings if transmission has occurred in the past (e.g., emergency departments). Facilities should work with their [state and local health departments](#) to help make these decisions.

All health care personnel should receive TB education annually. TB education should include information on TB risk factors, the signs and symptoms of TB disease, and TB infection control policies and procedures. TB education materials can be found through [CDC](#), the [TB Centers of Excellence for Training, Education, and Medical Consultation](#), [NTCAexternal icon](#), [State TB Programs](#), and the [Find TB Resources](#) website.

Post-Exposure Screening and Testing

All health care personnel with a known exposure to TB disease should receive a [TB symptom](#) screen and timely testing, if indicated.

- Health care personnel with a previous negative TB test result should be tested immediately and re-tested 8 to 10 weeks after the last known exposure. For consistency,

the same type of TB test (e.g., TB blood test or TB skin test) should be used upon hire (i.e., preplacement) and for any follow-up testing.

- Health care personnel with a documented history of a positive TB test result do not need to be re-tested after exposure to TB. They should receive a [TB symptom](#) screen and if they have symptoms of TB, they should be evaluated for TB disease.

Related Links

- [Tuberculosis Screening, Testing, and Treatment of U.S. Health Care Personnel: Recommendations from the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association and CDC](#)
- [TB Infection Control](#)
- [TB Screening, Testing, and Treatment of U.S. Health Care Personnel: Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Infographic: Updated Recommendations for Tuberculosis TB- Screening, Testing, and Treatmentpdf icon](#)
- [Medscape CDC Expert Commentary: Updated Tuberculosis Guidelines for Healthcare Workersexternal icon](#)
- [Whiteboard video: Updated TB Testing and Treatment Recommendations for Health Care Personnel](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter: May 16, 2019](#)
- [Tuberculosis among healthcare personnel, United States, 2010–2016external icon](#)
- [Guidelines for preventing the transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in health-care settings, 2005pdf icon](#)
- [State TB Control Offices](#)
- [Testing and Diagnosis Fact sheets](#)
- [Testing and Diagnosis Guidelines](#)
- [Treatment Fact Sheets](#)
- [Using the Isoniazid/Rifapentine Regimen to Treat Latent Tuberculosis Infection \(LTBI\)external icon](#)
- [Questions and Answers About TB](#)
- [CDC Info](#)

[National TB Controllers Associationexternal icon](#)

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