
TB Service

Home isolation

A patient guide and practical advice on how to prevent the spread of tuberculosis (TB)

What is TB?

TB in the lungs and throat is a serious infectious illness. TB is spread from person to person through the air when you cough, talk loudly, sneeze, laugh or sing.

TB can affect other areas of the body but only TB in the lungs and throat is infectious.

What is home isolation?

This is when you are required to stay at home and limit your activities to prevent the spread of infectious TB. This means avoiding enclosed public spaces and other areas where lots of people gather.

How long will I need to be in home isolation?

At least 2 weeks but it might be longer. Your nurse / doctor will tell you when you can stop home isolation.

How do I protect people around me at home?

- ✓ It is ok for you to continue living with the same people as before your TB diagnosis. They will be automatically contacted by your nurse for TB screening tests.
- ✗ Do not have new visitors to your home.
- ✗ Stay away from people who have a greater risk of catching TB, e.g. young children and people with a weak immune system.

Please note: TB is not spread by sharing plates, cups or utensils, or on clothing, linen or furniture. It cannot be spread through using a toilet or by touch, such as shaking hands.

How to protect the people around me in the community?

You should stay at home but you can go outside for a walk, avoiding crowded areas.

- ✓ **Keep your TB appointments.**
- ✓ **Reschedule other routine appointments, e.g. the dentist and other medical appointments. If you think the appointment is urgent, you should phone them in advance to discuss.**
- ✗ **Avoid public transport.**
- ✗ **Stay off work, school / college.**
- ✗ **Do not go to enclosed public places such as shops, cinemas, restaurants, gyms and libraries.**
- ✗ **Do not go to places of worship, e.g. mosque, church, temple.**
- ✗ **Do not attend community and family gatherings.**

If you need a letter from the hospital for work, school / college to explain your absence, please ask your nurse or doctor.

If you require emergency care, make sure you tell the ambulance team and hospital that you are being treated for TB.

Tips for coping with home isolation

Home isolation can be difficult but it is necessary to prevent the spread of TB. Remember this is temporary and as long as you take your medicines properly you will return to normal life soon.

- ✓ Try to have a routine.
- ✓ Go out for a walk.
- ✓ Keep in contact with family and friends by telephone or email.

What are my responsibilities?

- ✓ Comply with home isolation.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put this in the bin after every use.
- ✓ Take your medicines as instructed and attend your TB appointments.

Who can I contact for more information?

TB service

What kind of support can I get?

The charity TB Alert provides information and support for people with TB through the website www.thetruthabouttb.org You can also receive support from someone who has had TB - to find out more go to www.tbalert.org/patient-support or call 01273 234 029.

How do I make a comment about my treatment?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have. However, if your experience of our services does not meet your expectations and you would like to speak to someone other than staff caring for you, please contact

The team are able to listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and are often able to help sort out problems on behalf of patients.

Alternatively, you may wish to write to us on the following address: