

# ISOLATION FOR CONTAGIOUS TUBERCULOSIS

DO I NEED TO BE ISOLATED?

YES ( ) NO ( )

If you have TB in your lungs, pleura or throat, you could spread the germs to others when they breathe in the air around you after you cough, sneeze, talk, laugh, sing or play a wind instrument. You must protect others from the TB germs by isolating yourself. TB in other parts of the body is not usually contagious and does not require isolation. TB is not spread by sharing utensils, plates, cups, clothing, bed linen, furniture, toilets or by shaking hands.

## What is home isolation?

You must stay at home and away from other people to stop the spread of TB germs and protect people around you. You must not:

- go to work, school, places of worship, restaurants, movie theatres, grocery stores, shopping malls or any other public place
- visit friends or relatives
- ride on buses, subways, trains or airplanes
- have visitors to your home, such as friends or relatives

## How long will I be isolated?

Home isolation will last until you are no longer contagious and cannot spread TB germs to other people. This may be for as short as two weeks or as long as a few months. How long you are contagious depends on how many TB germs are in your lungs, how sick you are and how well your body uses the TB medicine. Sputum tests, chest X-rays and symptom improvement will tell us when you are no longer contagious. Take every dose of your TB medicine to help you get out of isolation faster. The Public Health Nurse will tell you when it is safe to be around other people and go back to work or school.

## How do I protect my family?

- Take your TB medicine until the TB doctor tells you to stop
- Sleep in a room by yourself
- Open the windows to let out the TB germs
- Stay away from young children and people with weak immune systems as they can catch TB very easily
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze, and immediately throw the used tissues in the garbage
- Wear a surgical mask when you are around people in your home

## How can I protect other people like friends and neighbours?

- Stay at home
- Do not have visitors
- Stay away from public places
- Wear a surgical mask when you go to see your doctor and for lab tests and X-rays
- If you are picked up by an ambulance, tell the paramedics and the hospital emergency department that you have TB so they can take the necessary precautions

You can go outside for short walks in your neighbourhood without wearing a mask, but stay away from other people.



This is a surgical or procedural mask.