

## Tuberculosis cluster in Thunder Bay

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit is investigating a small cluster of active tuberculosis cases in the homeless/underhoused population in the City of Thunder Bay.

*Mycobacterium tuberculosis* is transmitted via airborne particles. *M. tuberculosis* may result in asymptomatic, latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) or symptomatic, active tuberculosis disease. LTBI is typically diagnosed via tuberculin skin testing (Mantoux test). LTBI is not contagious, but approximately 10% of people with LTBI will develop active disease sometime in their lives. Active respiratory tuberculosis, including pulmonary and laryngeal tuberculosis, is contagious, and requires airborne precautions, including fit-tested N95 respirators for healthcare providers.

In response to this cluster, the TBDHU would appreciate your assistance with the following:

- **Maintain a high index of suspicion** for respiratory tuberculosis in patients who present with new cough, chest pain, lymphadenopathy, hemoptysis, weight loss, fever, or night sweats.
- **Obtain imaging and sputum samples for diagnosis if you suspect active respiratory tuberculosis.** Tuberculin skin testing (TST) does not have a role in the diagnosis of active disease, as TST may be falsely negative with active disease.
- Under Ontario Regulation 559/91 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, **report all confirmed and suspected cases of active tuberculosis, and all cases LTBI** to the TBDHU Infectious Disease Program (625-5900 or 1-888-294-6630).

We will continue to update you about this situation and any recommendations that result from our ongoing investigation.

### References:

Canadian Tuberculosis Standards, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2014: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/canadian-tuberculosis-standards-7th-edition.html>.

**Questions? Please contact the TBDHU Infectious Disease Program at 625-5900 or 1-888-294-6630.**