

To contain the spread of a contagious illness, public health authorities rely on many strategies. One of these strategies is **Home Isolation**. This is a common practice in public health and aims to control exposure to an infectious or potentially infectious person. This may be undertaken voluntarily or mandated by public health authorities under law writing by the State of Oklahoma.

The State Medical Officer for the state of Oklahoma has determined that you may have an infectious disease called tuberculosis, also known as TB. Because this is a serious disease that can be given to others, you must take steps to prevent the spread of the TB germ. You are being confined at home on special precautions called **HOME ISOLATION**. This information will help you understand more about TB and what you must do.

What is tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs. TB can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, kidneys, or spine. The germs get into the air when a person with TB of the lungs coughs, sneezes, laughs, or sings. Using or touching dishes or eating utensils, clothing, bed linen, furniture or toilets does **NOT** spread TB.

What is HOME ISOLATION?

Home Isolation is when a person is required to remain at home and cannot go out to public places because of a contagious illness that can spread to other people. People on HOME ISOLATION are NOT allowed to leave their home except for needed medical care. This means the person is not allowed to go out in public, have visitors, go shopping for groceries, or use public transportation, until cleared by the Oklahoma State Health Department.

How long will I need to be on HOME ISOLATION?

The contagious period of your TB depends on how well your body responds to treatment. It may be as short as two weeks or it may be much longer. This will be based on the results of your sputum tests, x-rays and decreasing symptoms. Public Health staff will tell you when you are no longer contagious and may resume activities, such as work, school or shopping.

What are the symptoms of someone who has TB?

General symptoms of TB may include:

- Coughing
- Tiredness/feeling weak
- Night sweats
- Coughing up blood
- Fever
- Weight loss

Your family and other household members will have skin tests applied and or evaluated at the local county health departments when it is suspected or determined that you have active tuberculosis. If they develop any of the symptoms listed above, they should contact the public health department. Often, Public Health may determine co-workers or other persons in close contact will need to be tested also.

What else must I do about my TB?

Even when they are no longer contagious, most people with TB must take anti-TB medications for 6 to 12 months. **YOU MUST TAKE ALL YOUR MEDICATIONS AS INSTRUCTED** until the doctor and the Public Health Department tell you to stop. Keep all doctor appointments as scheduled. Observe for and report side effects of medicines to the health department nurse.

Usually you will have Directly Observed Therapy (DOT). DOT means a worker from the Public Health Department will visit daily and watch you taking your medicines.

What must I do to comply with my HOME ISOLATION restrictions?

Remain in your home and out of contact with the public (you may be outdoors at home). Do this until the Public Health Department tells you that you are no longer contagious. You cannot go out in public or have visitors. You CAN go to your TB health care appointments. You will be provided a mask for these appointments.

What about Family? Roommates?

If it is determined that you have contagious TB Public Health staff MUST evaluate all people who shared your household before your diagnosis. Your family and other household members will have skin tests applied and evaluated at the local county health department when it is determined that you have active tuberculosis. If they develop any of the symptoms listed above, they should contact the public health department. Often, the Public Health Department may determine co-workers or other persons in close contact will need to be tested also.

Legal Authority

You will receive a compliance order pursuant to 63 O.S. 1-106, 75 O.S. 314.1 and Rule 310:2-5-16 of the Procedures of State Department of Health. Violation of this order can result in an order to be confirmed for isolation and/or treatment to a health care facility or other treatment facility. Persons with contagious TB must be under adequate medical supervision and observe instructions of the State Medical Officer.

Remember...

If you take your medication, TB IS A CURABLE DISEASE. Having TB should not stop you from leading a normal life. Once it is determined that you are no longer contagious, you can return to work or school and do the same things you did before you had TB.

Until then, please....

Stay at home! Take all your medicines! Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze!

Call your local county health department listed below if you have questions or concerns.

Contact: _____ County Health Department
_____ Phone

OSDH 9/06



Acute Disease Service
Oklahoma State
Department of Health

For further information call or visit us on the World Wide Web
Acute Disease Service
Oklahoma State Department of Health
Phone (405) 271-4060
<http://ads.health.ok.gov>