

# Instructions for Home Respiratory Isolation

## How tuberculosis is spread

Tuberculosis is spread from person to person through the air. TB germs are put into the air when you have TB germs in your lungs or throat and you cough, sneeze, laugh or sing. People who are near you can breathe in the TB germs and become infected. TB germs can live in the air for up to 6 hours, even after you have left the room. TB is not spread on clothing, linen, furniture or toilets or by shaking hands. You can not spread TB on eating utensils, plates or cups.

## About home isolation

Your doctor is sending you home on “home isolation”. This means you are not sick enough to need hospital care, but you are still contagious (able to spread tuberculosis (TB) to other people). Home isolation helps prevent the spread of TB because you stay home and away from other people while you are contagious.

Home isolation is different for each person. Home isolation may last days, weeks, or months.

Taking *every dose* of your TB medicine kills the TB germs and will help you get off isolation sooner. That is why taking your medicine is so important! Your doctor will check sputum samples at least every two weeks to see how well the medicine is working. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when it is safe to go back to your normal routine.

## While you are on home isolation

- Stay at home unless you need medical care. You should put off all non-emergency appointments (dentist, hairdresser, etc.) until you are no longer contagious.
- If you must go to the doctor, **wear a mask and tell the doctor’s office staff you have TB.**
- If you have to be picked up by ambulance, **tell the paramedics you have TB.**
- Do not have visitors. Stay away from people who do not live with you. Babies, young children, and people with weak immune systems (cancer patients, people with HIV, people who have had an organ transplant) can catch TB very easily.
- **If you must be around other people while inside, wear a mask at all times.**
- You may be outside without a mask, if you are alone. It is harder for TB germs to infect others outside. TB germs are killed by sunlight.
- You may not ride in taxis, buses, trains, or airplanes.
- You may not go to school, work, church, the store or any other public place .
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze, or laugh. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Sleep alone in a separate room.
- Air out the room you are staying in by opening the window if the weather allows. You can also put a fan in the open window backwards so that the air is blown outside.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CALL THE TB NURSE AT \_\_\_\_\_.**