

What precautions should be taken when transporting a TB Patient?

TB transmission

TB is transmitted through the air. A person with TB disease of the lungs or larynx can release droplets containing *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (*M. tb*) into the air by coughing, sneezing, talking, or breathing. These droplets can cause TB infection if inhaled by anyone who shares air with the person with infectious TB.

During their stay in institutions such as hospitals, jails, and prisons, known or suspected infectious TB patients should be placed and should remain in negative pressure isolation rooms until they are non-infectious to reduce the risk of TB transmission.

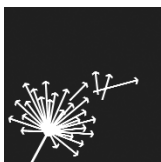
Transporting a known or suspected infectious TB patient

Occasionally TB patients may need to be transported elsewhere for medical or custodial reasons, or a negative pressure isolation room may not be available. This introduces the risk of TB transmission to others.

Patients are usually transported by:

- Car, bus, or ambulance, and
- Walking, wheelchair, or gurney through occupied rooms

The checklist that follows lists precautions that should be taken while transporting a known or suspected TB patient.



Francis J. Curry National Tuberculosis Center
<http://www.nationaltbcenter.edu>

TB Patient Transportation Checklist

The following steps should be taken to reduce the likelihood of tuberculosis (TB) transmission during transportation of a known or suspected TB patient.

Preparing for the transport

- Provide and instruct the patient to wear a surgical mask over his or her mouth and nose. The mask will help prevent particles from the patient's respiratory tract from being released into shared air. The patient should not wear a respirator.*
- Make sure that enough surgical masks are available for the entire journey. These masks should be changed when they become wet or torn.
- Notify the destination facility or department of the patient's planned arrival. Advise the facility or department in advance of the appropriate precautions and continuity of treatment needs of the patient. (To reduce the number of people that are potentially exposed to *M. tb*, schedule procedures for TB patients at times when they can be performed rapidly and when waiting areas are less crowded.)

Transporting within a facility

- Provide an escort for the patient while he or she is walking or being wheeled occupied areas. Having an escort will make it less likely that the patient will remove his or her surgical mask.

Transporting between facilities by car, bus, or ambulance

- Provide and require staff driving with a known or suspected TB patient to wear a respirator during the entire journey. At a minimum, the respirator should be an N-95 filter respirator approved by the National Institutes for Occupational Safety and Health.
- Transport additional passengers and staff members in a separate vehicle. This will reduce the number of people potentially exposed and also the number of people who are required to use respirators.
- Set ventilation controls to the fresh air or vent setting, rather than the recirculation setting.
- Set fan to high.
- Open as many windows as possible.
- Leave the vehicle unoccupied with the windows open for at least an hour after the end of the journey. A sign should be placed on the vehicle indicating when the car can be used again.

This information is available at our website: www.nationaltbcenter.edu

* A respirator has the opposite function to a surgical mask. A respirator is worn by staff to remove particles from the air that they inhale.