



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
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October 6, 2023

**MEDICAL ADVISORY: EVALUATION OF PEOPLE EXPOSED TO TUBERCULOSIS  
AT A NORTH HAWAII COUNTY SCHOOL**

- An individual at a North Hawaii County school has been diagnosed with active TB.
- Exposure assessment has identified 17 persons who may be at risk for TB transmission.
- DOH is working with the school to fully identify and evaluate those at risk, but families may choose to be evaluated at your office or practice.
- DOH is available to assist with evaluating a person who may have been exposed to TB.

Dear Healthcare Provider:

The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) TB Control Branch has identified an individual with pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) who has potentially exposed persons at a school in North Hawaii County. DOH has assessed the risk of TB transmission. We recommend *that those whom DOH has identified* as having a risk of exposure be evaluated and tested for TB.

DOH in partnership with the school administration, will deliver letters to all employees and parents at the affected school notifying them whether they or their child were exposed and recommending whether TB screening is needed. Please be aware that persons who were NOT identified as contacts will also receive letters explaining testing is NOT recommended.

Currently, DOH estimates approximately 17 individual contacts will require TB evaluation. For these persons, DOH will begin screening and administering TB tests at the Waimea Health Center on October 17, 2023. However, families may choose instead to be tested at your office or practice. If you do not feel comfortable performing the TB evaluation for these identified contacts, please encourage them to complete their evaluations during the TB clinic on October 17. If your patient cannot attend the clinic date, they may call the Waimea Public Health Office at 808-887-8116 to schedule an appointment.

DOH recommends taking the following steps when **evaluating a person who has received a letter indicating exposure:**

If NO history of prior positive TB skin test

- Screen for signs and symptoms of active TB disease.<sup>1</sup>
- If signs and symptoms are absent, administer a TB skin test.
- Read the TB skin test 48–72 hours later.
- If the TB skin test is positive ( $\geq 5$  mm induration for persons recently exposed to

<sup>1</sup><http://health.hawaii.gov/tb/frequently-asked-questions-2/>

active TB disease) **or if symptoms of TB disease are present**, obtain a chest X-ray. Consider treatment of latent TB if active TB not identified.

- If the TB skin test is negative (<5 mm induration), administer a repeat TB skin test after November 25, 2023. (More than 8 weeks after last possible exposure.) If still negative no further follow-up is needed. If repeat skin test is positive, follow the above steps for a positive TB skin test.
- Please fax results to DOH TB Control Branch at (808) 832-5846.

If history of prior positive TB skin test

- Screen for signs and symptoms of active TB disease.
- Obtain a chest X-ray.
- Evaluate for treatment of latent TB if active TB is not identified. DOH recommends treatment of latent TB.
- Fax results to DOH TB Control Branch at (808) 832-5846.

Interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) blood testing can be performed in lieu of TB skin testing and is the preferred method of initial testing for people who have received BCG vaccination. If IGRA testing is positive, obtain a chest xray and follow guidance similar to a positive TB skin test. See [CDC's IGRAs Blood Tests for TB Infection Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

Note that members of the school community who were not considered to be in the exposed group may still seek TB testing from you. While a TB skin test is not recommended in this scenario, note that a TB skin test is considered positive at  $\geq 10$  mm induration for people in Hawaii without a clear exposure risk. See [CDC's Tuberculin Skin Testing Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter and for partnering with us to ensure a safe and healthy community. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Elizabeth MacNeill (808) 322-1500 press option 5 or Dr. Lester Morehead at the Department of Health TB Control Branch, (808) 832-5535.

Sincerely,



Diana Felton, MD

Chief, DOH Communicable Disease and Public Health Nursing Division