

Tuberculosis Screening Process

The nursing triage process is to place patients on Airborne Precautions pending CXR results for patients with a primary diagnosis of rule out tuberculosis **OR** for patients with a cough >2 weeks and one other TB symptom (e.g., hemoptysis, night sweats, weight loss, anorexia, fever, chills).

For patients on Airborne Precautions with a diagnosis of rule out tuberculosis, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued new guidelines* for the screening process as follows:

- Collect 3 sputum samples for AFB smears **8 to 24 hours apart**. One of the sputums must be collected in the early morning.
- When all three smears are negative **OR** another diagnosis is likely, the physician may consider discontinuation of Airborne Precautions.

For patients with known active pulmonary tuberculosis, guidance remains the same:

- Place the patient on Airborne Precautions;
- Collect 3 early morning sputums for AFB smear, at least 24 hours apart.
- When all three smears are negative and the patient has a resolution of symptoms, the physician may consider discontinuation of Airborne Precautions.

Please contact Infection Prevention at ext. 1433 if you need additional information.

*Guidelines for Preventing the Transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in Health-care settings. (2005). *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 54, RR-17. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.