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### **Evaluation of Contacts to Active Tuberculosis**

The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) in collaboration with Guam Memorial Hospital (GMH) will begin screening on Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, of babies identified as contacts to the active case of tuberculosis diagnosed in an employee of GMH who worked in the Nursery. A total of 311 babies exposed during the period of April 1, 2017 to August 8, 2017, will be screened. GMH staff are currently contacting the parents of the babies to schedule an appointment for screening and evaluation which will be done at the hospital.

DPHSS will send out letters to contacts who were not successfully contacted by telephone. Efforts will be made to contact individuals who have undeliverable mailing addresses or do not have working telephone numbers. For parents whose contact number(s) have changed please call the GMH switchboard at 647-2552 – 4 to verify if their baby is on the list of contacts who need to be screened.

Those individuals who prefer to be seen at their respective clinic will be provided with a letter to their clinician to ensure that appropriate screening and preventive treatment are provided. Isoniazid (INH) prophylaxis is recommended until the baby gets a PPD skin test at 6 months of age. If the PPD skin test result is negative, then treatment can be stopped. For those babies who have a PPD skin test result that is positive, continued prophylaxis is recommended for a total of 9 months.

The medication (INH) is covered by MIP, Medicaid and most insurances. There should be no reason why a person with insurance is not able to get the medication. Therefore, we are requesting local pharmacies to also have the medication available to their customers.

Exposure to TB does not result in TB disease immediately unlike in the case of other communicable diseases such as measles, mumps etc. It takes anywhere from 2-12 weeks to see evidence of TB infection as shown by a positive PPD skin test reaction. A baby less than 6 month of age should undergo a chest x-ray regardless of the PPD skin test result since a PPD at this age would most likely be negative.

Signs and symptoms of active TB in an infant include:

- Cough;
- Feelings of sickness or weakness, lethargy, and/or reduced playfulness;
- Weight loss or failure to thrive;
- Fever; and/or
- Night sweats.

Most people who get exposed to TB might be able to keep the infection inactive or latent. However, children below the age of 5 years, people with Diabetes, or other immunosuppressive conditions may not be able to keep the infection under control and are at higher risk of developing active tuberculosis within a few months

up to 2 years after the exposure. Appropriate preventive measures as well as close monitoring of all exposed individuals particularly newborns, for any sign of active TB is recommended.

For information regarding appointment scheduling for baby contacts, please call the GMH switchboard at 647-2552/3/4. For general information on TB, please call the TB Control Program at 735-7131/7145 or go to [www.cdc.gov/tb](http://www.cdc.gov/tb).



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