

# People at risk for tuberculosis

Information for clinicians and health workers

## At risk populations

At risk populations for tuberculosis (TB) include:

- babies
- young children
- sick people
- elderly people.

These populations are also at higher risk of developing severe forms of TB disease. After an exposure, people are treated with higher clinical suspicion than the general population.

## Co-morbidities

People with pre-existing health conditions are also more at risk of developing TB after exposure. People with conditions that affect their immune system such as HIV, diabetes, renal disease or those on immunosuppressants are at particular risk and are treated with higher clinical suspicion after exposure.

## Social determinants

In 2021, TB killed more than 1 million people worldwide. Developing countries report higher rates of TB compared to developed countries such as Australia (*WHO high level meeting on TB 22 September 2023*). Australia reports a rate of approximately 5.5 cases per 100,000 population, however even in developed countries at risk populations are disproportionately affected by TB disease.

Reported rates for non-Indigenous Australians are usually <1 case per 100,000 however, reported rates for Aboriginal populations can be five to six times higher - varying between states and territories over time.

It is important to recognise that many Aboriginal and other at-risk populations have experienced complex underlying socio-economic factors that at times increase their risk of TB infection and disease.

## For more information:

Royal Adelaide Hospital, SA TB Services  
Telephone: (08) 7074 1089 (business hours)

[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)

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