



# Info sheet for professionals: Tuberculosis and migration from high-incidence countries

Many people are currently arriving in Switzerland from Ukraine and Russia. Both countries are considered high-incidence countries with regard to multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and have experienced considerable restrictions in healthcare in recent years – including as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Newly arrived persons can spend the first 90 days in Switzerland as a tourist and register for [protection status S](#). Many of them are staying with families, friends or acquaintances. In order to ensure optimal healthcare provision, you as a professional can do the following:

## 1. Think TB!

This means generally considering the possibility of tuberculosis in case of symptoms such as cough, fever or sputum. Make your colleagues aware of the issue and the current situation. Our flyer [“Think TB”](#) can help with this.

## 2. Upon first medical contact with a person from a high-incidence country

Take a thorough medical history and use the free online test “tb-screen” to obtain a risk assessment for pulmonary tuberculosis: [www.tb-screen.ch](http://www.tb-screen.ch). Please act respectfully when dealing with the affected persons to avoid stigmatisation.

## 3. Upon first medical contact with a child under 12 years of age from a high-incidence country

Children under 12 years of age have a much higher risk of developing tuberculosis. Proceed according to the adapted [PIGS](#) guidelines and the migration reference group of [pädiatrie schweiz](#).

## 4. If tuberculosis is suspected

Take a chest X-ray and, if the chest X-ray is abnormal, have the sputum tested using Xpert MTB/RIF. In pregnant women: first do an IGRA, only if the result is positive should a chest X-ray be done. Wear an FFP2 mask when dealing with the affected persons until tuberculosis has been ruled out and follow the general isolation instructions of your institution.

## 5. For questions about suspected or confirmed tuberculosis

Call the Tuberculosis Competence Centre hotline for free, expert support: **0800 388 388**

### TB and MDR-TB in Ukraine – Facts and figures (2020)<sup>1</sup>

TB incidence: 32,000 or 73/100,000 inhabitants  
(CH: 400 or 4.7/100,000)

HIV-positive TB incidence: 7,000 or 16/100,000 inhabitants  
(CH: 18 or 0.21/100,000)

Laboratory-confirmed MDR-RR-TB cases: 4,300 = 13 % (CH: 5 = 1.3 %)

Laboratory-confirmed pre-XDR/XDR-TB cases: 1,200 = 3.8 %  
(CH: 1 = 0.3 %)

<sup>1</sup> WHO Global TB report 2021 app: data for Ukraine



### 6. If tuberculosis is confirmed

A case of tuberculosis must be reported to the relevant cantonal medical office. You can find the form for this [here](#). The cantonal medical office decides whether an environmental investigation should be initiated and notifies the cantonal TB office ([for contacts see page 3](#)). Details on further procedures and responsibilities can be found in the [TB handbook](#). In principle, it is advisable to take an HIV test as a standard after a TB diagnosis, since the rate of HIV-positive TB cases is high in high-incidence countries.

### 7. If MDR-TB is confirmed

Call the hotline for information on therapy options and/or register at [tinfo@lung.ch](mailto:tinfo@lung.ch) for access to the online forum, where you can discuss the treatment of an MDR-TB case anonymously with other professionals.

### Information material

Further information and all forms and publications on the subject of tuberculosis can be found in the online competence centre: [www.tinfo.ch](http://www.tinfo.ch)

### FAQs

for those affected can be found here in Ukrainian, Russian and other languages: <https://www.tinfo.ch/wissenszentrum/publikationen/faktenblaetter-tuberkulose.html>



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