

Why do I need to take TB medicine regularly?

TB bacteria die very slowly. It takes at least 6 months for the medicine to kill all the bacteria. You will probably start to feel better after only a few weeks on treatment but remember, the TB bacteria are still alive in your body. You must continue to take your medicine until your doctor tells you otherwise. If you stop taking the medicine before your doctor tells you, your TB may become worse. You may become infectious again.

Public Health

A member of the Public Health Team may contact you or your family for a list of people you have been in contact with. TB is a notifiable disease which means that the local department of public health must be informed of all persons infected. They will arrange follow up for these people who have been in contact with you.

Instructions for Visitors

Visitors may need to wear a mask before entering the patient room. Please check at the nurses station before visiting.

Visitors whom you have not previously been exposed should not visit
Visitors who are unwell, pregnant immunosuppressed, or under the age of 12 years should not visit while you are infectious.

If a patient has TB we may share that information with other hospitals. The Patient should also inform their carers of the result on admission to another hospital.

Latent TB

In some people the bacteria become inactive but remain dormant. These can become active later. This is called latent TB infection (LTBI)

How can I contact a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team?

Tell the Clinical Nurse Manager or nurse looking after you if you would like to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team and they will contact us.

We have made every possible effort to make sure that all the information provided in this leaflet is true, accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication.

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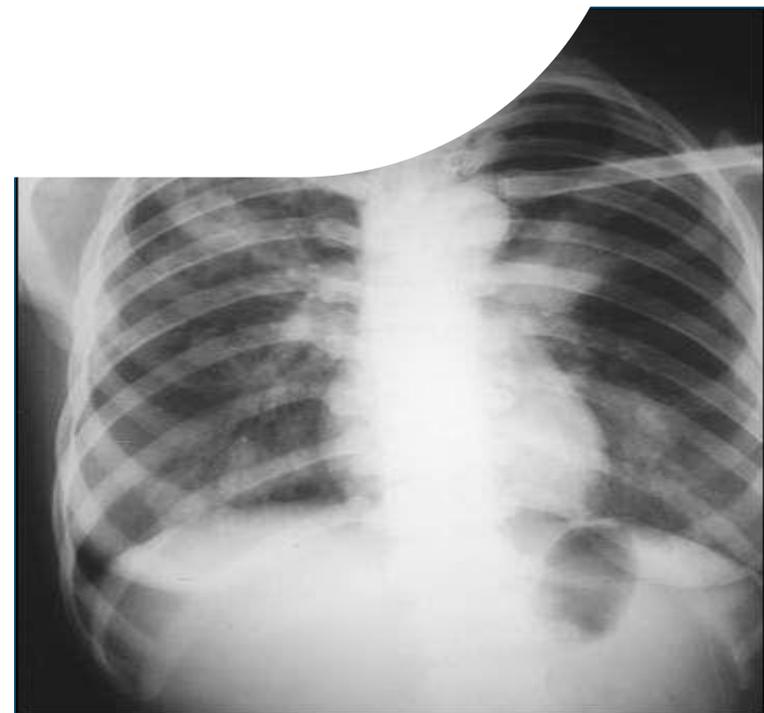
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PATIENT
INFORMATION
LEAFLET

Tuberculosis (TB)



What is TB?



TB stands for **Tuberculosis**. It is caused by a bacterium (germ) called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB usually affects the lungs but can affect other parts of the body including the glands, bones and rarely the brain. Diagnosis of pulmonary TB is usually made on sputum sample sent for microbiological testing and chest x-ray.

TB disease is preventable and curable.

What are the symptoms of active TB disease?

The symptoms may include:

- A cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer
- Fever and night sweats
- Coughing up blood or sputum (phlegm)
- Weight loss
- No appetite

How is TB spread?

The TB germ is usually spread in the air when a person with active TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs or sneezes. People nearby may breathe in the germ and become infected. Usually you need to be in close contact for a period of time with someone infectious to become infected with the TB bacterium yourself

TB in the lungs or throat can be infectious (can spread to other people). TB in other parts of the body is not usually easily spread.

People with active TB disease are most likely to spread the germ to people they spend time with every day such as family members, friends and co-workers.

What can I do to prevent the spread of TB while in hospital?

If you or your family have been in contact with someone with TB or if you have a history of TB please let the Nurse or Doctor know when you are being admitted.

If you are diagnosed with, or suspected to have an active TB infection you will be placed in a single room with en-suite toilet facilities with the door kept closed at all times.

It is very important to cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissues when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of these items immediately into the yellow bin in your room and wash your hands or use alcohol hand gel.

If you have to go to another department for treatment such as x-ray or theatre you must wear a mask before leaving your room. To prevent spread of the germ to other people, it is not advisable for you to visit other patients on the ward, use the communal washing facilities or visit the public areas in the hospital.

Any healthcare staff entering your room will be wearing a mask. A red coloured sign will be placed on the outside of your room door reminding staff and visitors to wear a mask.

How is active TB treated?

Your doctor will prescribe several different medicines. They must be taken as prescribed. It is recommended not to drink alcohol while on treatment. Treatment involves taking medicine for at least six months and regularly attending outpatient clinics.

Ask your Ward Pharmacist/Doctor about possible side effects, interaction with other medicines and how to get your medicines when you leave hospital.

You may need to stay at home from school or work for a couple of weeks so that you don't spread TB to other people as advised by your Doctor. After taking your medicine for a few weeks, you should start to feel better and may no longer be infectious to others.

