



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

TUBERCULOSIS FACT SHEET

What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacteria called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The most common place to develop TB is in the lungs. Other organs such as the kidney, spine and brain. **Not everyone infected with TB becomes sick.** A person can either have **Latent TB** (can remain inactive entire lifetime) and **Active TB** (infection is present).

What are the symptoms?

Latent TB Infection:

- NO symptoms
- Cannot spread TB to others
- Skin-test reactions are usually positive
- Normal chest X-ray

Active TB Disease:

- A bad cough that has lasted for more than 3 weeks
- Pain in chest
- Coughing up blood
- Fever
- Chills
- No appetite

How can it be spread?

- Droplets from the nose, mouth or throat or direct contact with an infected person
- Through airborne droplets when a person with active TB coughs, sneezes, talks, sings or spits

How it is treated?

Talk to your health care provider if you feel that you are at risk for TB exposure or of any symptoms

- **Latent TB Infection (LTBI)** has 3 treatment regimens a doctor may recommend taken over 3, 4 or 9 months. Proper treatment of LTBI may eliminate the risk of active TB disease.
- **Active TB Disease** is treated initially with a combination of four antibiotics for a minimum of 6 months and directly observed therapy called DOT is used

How can it be prevented?

- Take medication as directed if prescribed
- Those who are at a greater risk to get TB exposure should be tested with a TB skin test