



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