

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, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body 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) or **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 lasts for more than 3 weeks
- Pain in the chest
- Coughing up blood
- Fever
- Chills
- No appetite

More Information: <http://www.cdc.gov/tb>

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 is it treated?

Those who have symptoms or feel they are at risk for TB exposure, should talk to their health care provider.

- **Latent TB Infection (LTBI)** has 3 treatment regimens a doctor may recommend taken over a 3, 4 or 9 month period. 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

How can it be prevented?

- Take medication as directed if prescribed
- Those at greatest risk for TB exposure should be tested with a TB skin test

