

# 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 Infection** (TB bacteria are present, but inactive) or **Active TB Disease** (TB bacteria are active). If not treated properly, TB can be fatal.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

*Latent (Inactive) TB Infection:*

- NO symptoms
- Skin-test reactions are usually positive
- Normal chest X-ray

*Active TB Disease:*

- A bad cough that lasts for 3 weeks or longer
- Pain in the chest
- Coughing up blood
- Fever/Chills
- Weakness or fatigue
- No appetite

**Symptoms of Active TB Disease depend on where in the body the TB bacteria are growing.**

## How is it spread?

**TB bacteria is spread through the air from one person to another.**

- When a person with Active TB Disease of the lungs or throat coughs, speaks, or sings, TB bacteria can get into the air. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

Active TB Disease in the lungs or throat can be infectious, but TB in other parts of the body, such as the kidney or spine, is usually not able to spread to others.

Latent TB Infection cannot spread to others.

## 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 4 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.

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

This FACT SHEET is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a healthcare provider. For more information call your healthcare provider.

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