

TB ANYWHERE IS EVERYWHERE

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Information for patients

Tuberculosis - what you need to know if you have TB

TB is a disease that affects millions of people each year. Below are the basic facts that everybody needs to know about this curable disease.

What is TB?

TB is caused by a bacterium (germ). The disease is preventable and curable.

How is TB spread?

TB is spread by air droplets, which can be passed on through sneezing, coughing, talking, spitting, etc. – basically any way in which moisture can escape from one person, into the air, to another person.

The droplets can remain suspended in the air for long periods.

How does TB affect the body?

Most commonly, TB affects the lungs, but it can affect any part of the body.

What are the symptoms and signs of TB?

Important symptoms include:

- coughing for more than 2-3 weeks;
- producing sputum (phlegm) when you cough;
- weight loss.

Other symptoms can include chest pain, blood-stained sputum (phlegm), fever and night-sweats.

TB in parts of the body other than the lungs can result in pain wherever the TB is located, and weight loss.

If you think you have any of the symptoms above, then seek medical advice as early as possible.

What will happen if I have TB?

If you are diagnosed with TB, don't worry! TB is curable, and millions of people around the world have recovered from the illness and never become ill again with TB.

But, if you are sick, remember to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze – so as not to spread the infection to other people. Get plenty of rest, eat healthy food and let your family and friends know that you have TB and that you are being treated.

What should I do to get better?

Most importantly, take the TB drugs as prescribed by your health worker. After a full course of drugs has been completed, check with your health worker that you have fully recovered.

Why is it important to complete the full drugs course?

Even if you are feeling better, keep taking your drugs until you're fully cured.

If you stop taking your drugs before the course is complete, the TB bacterium can become stronger and you can develop drug-resistant TB. Drug-resistant TB will continuously spread and is more difficult to treat and therefore can be more dangerous.

Drug-resistant TB is more likely to cause death.

What about HIV and TB?

Undetected, TB in people living with HIV can cause death within weeks.

If you are HIV positive, or think you may be HIV positive, it is essential you get tested for TB. It could save your life!

TB is preventable and curable. FUND THE GLOBAL PLAN TO STOP TB.