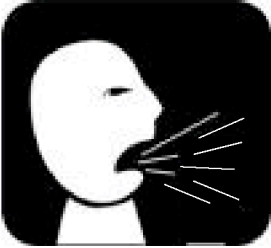


# About Tuberculosis (TB)



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## What Is TB?



TB is short for tuberculosis, a disease that is caused by germs that can be in the air. The disease mostly goes to the lungs. If a person with TB disease coughs or sneezes, anyone who is near can breathe the TB germs into their lungs.

A person can be infected with TB and not feel sick. This is called **TB infection**. But in some people the TB germs can cause weight loss, sweating at night, coughing up blood, and chest pain. This is called **TB disease**. TB disease can go into the lungs, the kidney and the spine. If people have TB disease they need medical help. If they don't get help they can die.

## How was I exposed to TB?

A person can get TB if they spend a lot of time near someone who has TB and is coughing or sneezing. You can only get TB by breathing in TB germs that a person coughs into the air. You can not get TB from someone's clothes or drinking glass. You can not get TB by shaking hands with someone.

## How do I know if I have TB infection?

A person can be infected with TB and not feel sick. One of the best ways to tell if you have TB is by a skin test. The test is done by putting a little bit of test material under the skin with a needle. The test must be read within 2 to 3 days. If you get a big red bump under your skin at that spot it may mean that you are infected with TB. If you don't have a bump, you may be tested again in a few weeks just to be sure. If you do have **TB infection**, you may need medicines.



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## What can be done about TB?

If you have **TB disease**:

- The doctor can give you medicines that will cure TB. These medicines must be taken for at least 6 to 9 months so that all of the TB germs can be killed. It is important that you take all



of your medicine, even after you start to feel better. If you don't take all of your medicine, the TB germs that are left over will become stronger. Then you will need to take even stronger medicines to kill the TB.

- Cover your cough to keep from spreading the TB germs. If you are coughing in a hospital waiting room, ask for a mask.

## What can I do?

Along with taking your medicines, there are things you can do to help care for yourself and your family:

- If you have TB infection or TB disease, get your family and close friends to take a skin test so that they can get medicine if needed.
- Let your doctor know if you:
  - Lose weight
  - Sweat at night
  - Cough up blood
  - Have chest pain



These are all signs of **TB disease**.