

WORLD TUBERCULOSIS (TB) DAY 2021

What is Tuberculosis?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacterium called mycobacterium tuberculosis. The bacteria usually attacks the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain.

How TB spreads

- TB bacteria are spread through the air from one person to another.
- The TB bacteria are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, speaks, or sings.
- People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

TB is NOT spread by

- Shaking someone's hand or kissing
- Sharing food, drinks or utensils
- Touching bed linens, clothes or toilet seats
- Sharing food or drink
- Sharing toothbrushes

Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms of TB disease depend on where in the body the TB bacteria are growing. TB bacteria usually grow in the lungs (pulmonary TB):

- TB disease in the lungs may cause symptoms such as:
- Bad cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer
- Pain in the chest
- Coughing up blood or sputum (phlegm from deep inside the lungs)

Other symptoms of TB disease are:

- Weakness or fatigue
- Weight loss and no appetite
- Chills and fever
- Sweating at night
- Symptoms of TB disease in other parts of the body depend on the area affected.

If you have been diagnosed with active TB, be sure to:

- Complete the full course of your TB medications.
- Stay at home especially during the first two weeks of treatment.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and wear a face mask when around people during the first few weeks of treatment

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TB Risk Factors

Risk Factors Generally, persons at high risk for developing TB disease fall into two categories:

- Persons who have been recently infected with TB bacteria
- Persons with medical conditions that weaken the immune system.

TB Prevention

Many people who have latent TB infection never develop TB disease. Latent TB Infection: TB bacteria can live in the body without making you sick. In most people who breathe in TB bacteria and become infected, the body can fight the bacteria to stop them from growing. Some people who have latent TB infection are more likely to develop TB disease than others.

- Those at high risk for developing TB disease include:
 - People with HIV infection
 - People who became infected with TB bacteria in the last 2 years
 - Babies and young children
 - People who inject illegal drugs
 - People who are sick with other diseases that weaken the immune system
 - Elderly people
 - People who were not treated correctly for TB in the past

Testing & Diagnosis

- TB skin test (TST) and TB blood tests. A positive TB skin test or TB blood test only tells that a person has been infected with TB bacteria. It does not tell whether the person has latent TB infection or has progressed to TB disease.
- Chest x-ray
- Sample of sputum
- Culture: a test to see whether there are TB bacteria in your phlegm or other body fluids
- Directly observed therapy (DOT): a way of helping patients take their medicine for TB

Prevention tips

- Go for a check-up if you suspect that you could be suffering from TB.
- Keep your immune system functioning properly by adopting healthy eating habits, exercising regularly, and getting sufficient sleep.
- If someone you know has contracted TB, encourage him or her to adhere faithfully to the treatment.