

TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

Learn about this Easily Spread Infection

People with tuberculosis (TB) may not always have signs. To prevent problems related to TB you must learn the early signs.

WHAT IS TB?

TB is an infection. It usually attacks the lungs. It can attack other parts of the body. You can get TB or spread it by coughing or sneezing. It spreads more easily in closed spaces. People who lack medical care, live in crowded conditions or have poor nutrition are at higher risk for this disease. You can have TB for many years without feeling sick.

SIGNS OF TB

Get checked if you think you were around someone with TB, or if you have these signs:

- ▶ You have trouble breathing
- ▶ It hurts when you breathe
- ▶ You have a cough that won't go away
- ▶ You cough up blood
- ▶ You have fever and sweating at night
- ▶ You are not hungry or have lost weight without trying
- ▶ You are tired for no reason or have no energy

Your doctor will give you a skin test to see if you have TB. He or she may test what comes up when you cough. You might get a chest x-ray.

WHO GETS TB?

About one out of every 20 people is infected with TB. Some people are more likely to get TB, such as:

- ▶ More men than women
- ▶ People of color
- ▶ People over age 70
- ▶ People who smoke
- ▶ People with HIV

HOW IS TB TREATED?

Your doctor will give you more than one kind of medicine. You will need to take them for six to nine months. Some kinds of TB may need medicine that you take as long as two years. Do not stop taking the medicine even if you think you feel better. Talk to your doctor first. Once a person starts treatment, they can't spread the germ to others.

Protect yourself and others from TB. See your doctor if you show any signs or if you have been around someone who has it.