

Why is Latent TB Infection Treated?

If you have latent TB infection (LTBI) but not TB disease, your doctor may want you to take a drug to kill the TB germs and prevent you from developing TB disease. The decision about taking treatment for latent infection will be based on your chances of developing TB disease. Some people are more likely than others to develop TB disease once they have TB infection. This includes people with HIV infection, people who were recently exposed to someone with TB disease, and people with certain medical conditions.

If you have LTBI and are a resident of Saratoga County, you may seek medical treatment with a doctor at the Saratoga County Chest Clinic. The clinic is held once a month and an appointment is needed. Please call us at 584-7460 to schedule an appointment.

How is TB Disease Treated?

TB disease can be treated by taking several drugs for six to twelve months. It is very important that people who have TB disease finish the medicine and take the drugs exactly as prescribed. If they stop taking the drugs too soon, they can become sick again. If they do not take the drugs correctly, the germs that are still alive may become resistant to those drugs. TB that is resistant to drugs is harder and more expensive to treat. In some situations, staff of the local health department meet regularly with patients who have TB to watch them take their medications. This is called *directly observed therapy (DOT)*. DOT helps the patient complete treatment in the least amount of time.

A Global Perspective on Tuberculosis

TB is one of the world's deadliest diseases:

- ▶ One-third of the world's population is infected with TB.
- ▶ Each year, nearly nine-million people around the world become sick with TB.
- ▶ Each year, there are almost two-million TB-related deaths worldwide.
- ▶ TB is the leading killer of people who are HIV infected.



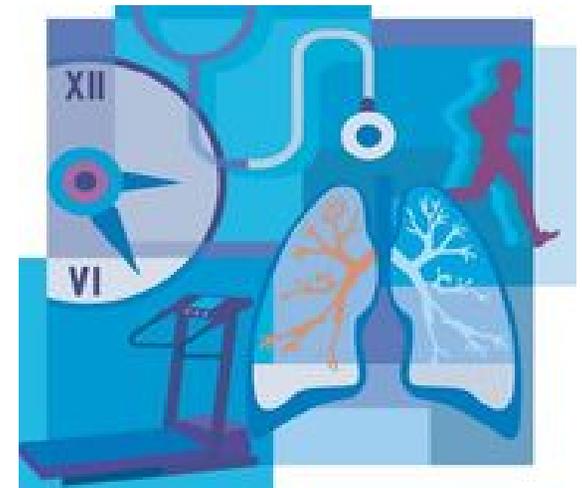
Additional Information

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Questions and Answers About TB (2007)
www.cdc.gov/tb/faqs/default.htm

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Tuberculosis Program



IT'S TIME  **TO ELIMINATE TB**

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TUBERCULOSIS: GENERAL INFORMATION

What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by germs that are spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine. A person with TB can die if they do not get treatment.

What are the Symptoms of TB?

Symptoms of TB disease include feelings of sickness or weakness, weight loss, fever, and night sweats. Symptoms of TB disease of the lungs also include coughing, chest pain, and the coughing up of blood. Symptoms of TB disease in other parts of the body depend on the area affected.

How is TB Spread?

TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. These germs can stay in the air for several hours, depending on the environment. People who breathe in the air containing these TB germs can become infected; this is called latent TB infection.

What is the Difference Between Latent TB Infection and TB Disease?

People with *latent TB infection* have TB germs in their bodies, but they are not sick because the germs are not active. These people do not have symptoms of TB disease, and they cannot spread the germs to others. They may, however, develop TB disease in the future.

They are often prescribed treatment to prevent them from developing TB disease.

People with *TB disease* are sick from TB germs that are active, meaning that they are multiplying and destroying tissue in their body. They usually have symptoms of TB disease. People with TB disease of the lungs or throat can spread germs to others. They are prescribed drugs that can treat their TB disease.

Who Gets TB Disease?

Once a person has TB infection, he or she has a higher chance of getting TB disease if the person:

- Has HIV infection
- Has recently been infected with TB germs (in the last two years)
- Has other health problems, i.e. diabetes or weakened immune system
- Uses alcohol or injects illegal drugs
- Was not treated correctly for TB infection in the past

What if I Have Spent Time with Someone with Latent TB Infection?

A person with latent TB infection cannot spread germs to other people. You do not need to be tested. However, if you spent time with someone with TB disease or someone with symptoms of TB, you should be tested.

What Should I Do if I Have Been Exposed to Someone with TB Disease?

People with TB disease are most likely to spread the germs to people they spend time with every day, such as family members or co-workers. *If you have been around someone who has TB disease, you should go to your doctor or local health department for tests.*

How Do You Get Tested for TB?

There are two tests used to detect TB infection. The Mantoux (PPD) tuberculin skin test is performed by injecting a small amount of fluid (called tuberculin) into the skin in the lower arm. A person given this skin test must return within 48 to 72 hours to have a trained health care worker look for a reaction on the arm.

A second test is the QuantiFERON®-TB Gold test. This test is a blood test that measures how the patient's immune system reacts to the germs that cause TB.

Saratoga County Public Health offers TB skin tests every Monday and Tuesday from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. (holidays excluded). It is a walk-in clinic; no appointment is necessary. There is a \$10 charge for the test.

What Does a Positive Tuberculin Skin Test or QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Test Mean?

A positive TB skin test or QuantiFERON®-TB Gold test only tells that a person has been infected with TB germs. It does not tell whether or not the person has progressed to TB disease. Other tests, such as a chest x-ray and sample of sputum, are needed to see whether the person has TB disease.

What is Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG)?

BCG is a vaccine for TB disease. BCG is used in many countries but is generally not recommended in the United States because it does not completely prevent people from getting TB. It may also cause a false positive TB skin test. However, persons who have been vaccinated with BCG *can* be given a tuberculin skin test or QuantiFERON®-TB Gold test.