

Can TB disease be cured?

Yes! TB disease can be cured by using special drugs that kill TB germs. But TB germs are strong. It takes at least six to nine months of medication to wipe them all out. It is very important that you take all your medicine.



If you stop taking medication too soon, it is a big problem. The TB germs that are still alive become even stronger. You may need stronger drugs to kill these “super” TB germs. This doesn’t have to happen. If you take all of the medicine, the TB germs will die.

A few people have side effects to anti-TB drugs. You will get tests to check on this.

**Protect your family and friends from TB -
take all your anti-TB drugs!!**

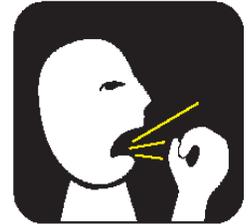
***Purdue University Student Health Center
Allergy & Immunization Dept.
601 Stadium Mall Drive
(765) 494-1818
www.Purdue.edu/PUSH***

facts about.....

TUBERCULOSIS

What is TB?

“TB” is short for a disease called tuberculosis. TB is spread by tiny germs that can float in the air. The TB germs may spray into the air if a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, shouts, or sneezes. The people nearby can breathe TB germs into their lungs.



TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. This is called TB infection. Your immune system traps TB germs with special germ fighters. Your germ fighters keep TB germs from making you sick.

But sometimes, the TB germs can break away and spread. Then they cause TB disease. The germs can attack the lungs or other parts of the body. They can go to the kidneys, the brain, or the spine. If anyone has TB disease, they need medical help. If they don’t get help, they can die.

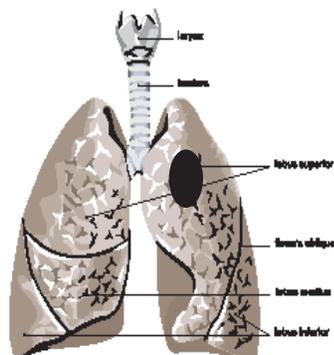
If you have TB disease, you may:

- feel weak
- lose your appetite
- lose weight
- have a fever, or
- sweat a lot at night

These are signs of TB disease. These signs may last for several weeks. Without treatment, they usually get worse.

If the TB disease is in your lungs, you may:

- cough a lot
- cough up mucus or phlegm
- cough up blood, or
- have chest pain when you cough



You should always cover your mouth when you cough.

If you get TB disease in another part of the body, the symptoms will be different. Only a doctor can tell if you have TB disease.

BCG

BCG is a vaccine for TB. This vaccine is not widely used in the United States, but it is often given to infants and small children in other countries where TB is common. BCG may offer some degree of protection for infants and young children in preventing certain deadly forms of TB, but the protection goes away over time.

Not all people react to it, and it does not prevent TB disease from developing in adults. If you were vaccinated with BCG, you may have a positive reaction to a TB test. This reaction may be due to the BCG vaccine itself or to a real TB infection. But your positive reaction probably means that you have TB infection if:

- your skin test reaction is large (10 mm or greater),
- you were vaccinated many years ago, or
- you are from an area where TB disease is common:
 - Latin America and the Caribbean,
 - Africa,
 - Asia,
 - Eastern Europe, and
 - Russia

How do I know if I have TB infection or TB disease?

A skin test is the most common way to tell if you have TB infection. The test is “positive” if a bump about the size of a pencil eraser or bigger appears on your arm. This bump means you probably have TB infection.



A blood test can decide if a positive TB skin test is due to infection or BCG. Other tests can show if you have TB disease. An x-ray of your chest can tell if there is damage to your lungs from TB. TB germs may be deep inside your lungs. Phlegm (“flem”) you cough up will be tested in a laboratory to see if the TB germs are in your lung.