

## The most common symptoms of TB include:

- ⊙ cough which lasts for more than three weeks, does not respond to normal medicine and keeps getting worse
- ⊙ fever (high temperature)
- ⊙ sweating at night so much that the bed sheets need changing
- ⊙ loss of weight for no reason
- ⊙ fatigue (lack of energy or extreme tiredness)
- ⊙ swollen glands.
- ⊙ coughing up blood (this is very rare but needs immediate medical advice)

All of these symptoms may be signs of other problems, but if you have three or more of them and are worried you should talk to a doctor or nurse at your local surgery or clinic.

If you have TB and would like to know more about it from someone who has had the disease, there is a book called *The Tuberculosis Survival Handbook* by Paul Mayho (Second Edition). The book costs £14.95 and is available through local bookshops, Gazelle book services and [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), or directly from the publishers, Merit Publishing International website [www.meritpublishing.com](http://www.meritpublishing.com) or email [merituk@aol.com](mailto:merituk@aol.com). The reference number to order the book is ISBN 1 873413 14 9.

Website [www.tbsurvivalproject.org](http://www.tbsurvivalproject.org)

Protect your family and friends from TB – take all your TB medicine

**Remember** the TB Nurse is here to help and advise throughout your treatment. Please contact your TB Nurse if you feel unwell on your treatment or if there is anything you are unsure of regarding your medication.

Your TB Nurse is:

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Your Hospital Doctor is:

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Contact no:

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Email:

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For further information, copies of this leaflet, or to make a donation please contact:



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For further information or copies of this leaflet, please contact 01273 234 770 (office hours only).

To make a donation or volunteer to help TB Alert, please contact 01273 234 784 (office hours only).

Or go to our website at [www.tbalert.org](http://www.tbalert.org)

### About TB Alert

TB Alert is a unique charity, raising awareness of Tuberculosis in the UK and supporting the work of the NHS by providing information to patients. We support projects in developing countries ensuring that all patients receive proper treatment. With your support we can make a positive, worldwide impact on Tuberculosis and save more lives.

Information given in this leaflet regarding the diagnosis and treatment of Latent Tuberculosis is intended to give general information about the subject. It is not intended as a substitute for the knowledge, expertise, skill, and judgment of your TB nurse/doctor or other health-care professionals. None of the information contained in this leaflet is intended to be used for decisions on diagnosis or treatment. Questions and concerns regarding diagnosis and treatment should be directed to a health care professional.

Original development work by the North West London TB Network.



## Latent Tuberculosis (TB) Infections Treatment



## What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial infection, mostly found in the lungs but which can affect any part of the body, making the person feel unwell. This is called active TB. Active TB is curable with a course of medicines lasting at least six months. Only TB of the lungs or throat may be infectious and most people will not be infectious within two weeks of taking the correct medicine.

It is also possible to have latent TB, or TB Infection. This means you have the germs inside you but your body is keeping them under control and stopping you from becoming unwell. People with latent TB do not have any symptoms and cannot pass the infection onto others.

## How is TB caught?

When someone with infectious TB of the lungs or throat coughs or sneezes, the germs can get into the air in small droplets and other people can breathe them in. People most likely to catch TB are those who have spent a lot of time with the person with TB (usually partners and other people in the same household, or rarely close work colleagues). It is unlikely that someone could catch TB in a place such as a bus or train, since contact for a number of hours with someone who is infectious is usually necessary to be at risk of infection.

TB is not spread by spitting or sharing objects.

## How does the doctor know I have latent TB infection?

The doctor or nurse will know from the results of various tests which may include a skin test or a blood test and/or a chest x-ray.

## Should I avoid certain food or other medicines while I am taking my TB medicine?

No, you can eat anything you like. But you should avoid drinking excessive alcohol.

It is very important that you tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines.

## Are medicines for TB safe?

As with all medicines, there may be side effects. Some side effects are minor, others may be more serious. Information about the different tablets and their side effects are available from clinic staff. It is important to remember that not taking the treatment will mean you could become very unwell with TB.

Your doctor or nurse will arrange some tests before you start your treatment.

## Why do I need to take the TB medicine for so long?

TB germs are killed very slowly. It takes at least 3 months for the medicine to kill all the germs. The length of the treatment depends on what medicines you are given. You must continue to take your medicine until all the TB germs are dead, even though you have no symptoms of TB disease.

## How can I remember to take my medicine?

It's not always easy! You will be taking your TB medicine for a long time (at least 3 months), so you should get into a routine. Here are some ways to remember to take your medicine regularly:

- ⦿ Take your medicines at the same time everyday and leave them in the same place.
- ⦿ Put your pills in a weekly dispenser.
- ⦿ Mark off each day on a calendar as you take your medicine.
- ⦿ Try setting an alarm to remind you to take your pills.
- ⦿ Ask a family member or friend to remind you to take your medicine, and if you still forget, your doctor or nurse may ask you to observe you taking your pills.
- ⦿ Tell your doctor or nurse if you miss a dose of medicine-they will not be angry and will try to help you.

You should also keep all your clinic appointments! Your doctor or nurse needs to see how you are doing.