



### Can anyone get TB?

Anyone can get TB (the list of ex-patients includes a UK Cabinet Minister, several world famous singers and an Archbishop!) but it is much more likely to affect those living in poor conditions or on poor diets (such as the homeless or people living in developing countries) and those with other illnesses – especially HIV.

### Who should I talk to if I am worried about TB?

If you are worried that you or someone you know may have some of the symptoms of TB, you should talk to your doctor about it.

### Can TB re-occur?

The simple answer is yes-it is possible, so if you have any doubts, please consult your GP.

### How common is TB?

We now realise that TB is very common in the poorest countries in the world where people often cannot afford to pay for effective treatment. **That is why TB kills 2 – 3 million people every year – even though it can be cured.**

Even in Britain there has been an overall increase of 20% in the last decade with an increase of 80% in London. The figures are still rising.

### Can I contact other patients/ groups for support?

If you would like to talk with other patients, please contact **TB Alert**. Contact details can be found on the back of this leaflet.

### Is there anything I can do to help?

You can become a friend of TB Alert, the charity that aims to promote awareness about TB and to fund projects in the UK and developing countries.

### Why we need your help and support

**TB Alert** raises awareness in Britain of the existence of the disease here, of the fact that the number of people infected is increasing and why we need to raise funds for research and treatment in developing countries and projects in the UK.

**TB Alert** supports projects in developing countries so that ALL patients can receive proper treatment. Only by treating patients globally can we ensure the health of people in Britain.

**TB Alert** is the only charity in Britain uniquely dedicated to Tuberculosis control. But we need help if we are to make a positive, worldwide impact on Tuberculosis.

### You can help!

Protect your family and friends from TB

### Additional Information and contacts

For more information, general enquiries, copies of this leaflet or to make a donation please contact:

**TB Alert**, 22 Tiverton Road, London NW10 3HL  
Tel: 020 8969 4830  
E-mail: [tbalert@somhealy.demon.co.uk](mailto:tbalert@somhealy.demon.co.uk)

### For fundraising enquiries please contact

Melanie Matthews on 0845 456 0995  
E-mail: [fundraising@tbalert.org](mailto:fundraising@tbalert.org)

Website@ [www.tbalert.org](http://www.tbalert.org)

**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.

Hon. President: Sir John Crofton MA MD FRCP (Ed and Lon)  
Chair: Mr. Paul Sommerfeld  
Secretary: Dr. Peter Davies

Any information given in this leaflet regarding the diagnosis and treatment of 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 physicians, pharmacists, and/or other health-care professionals in patient care. 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.



# TUBERCULOSIS Your Questions Answered



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No one is safe until we are all safe!



### How is TB spread?

Only people with TB in the lungs can spread the disease. They can cough up the bacteria and another person can breathe it in. A bit like a cold is caught, but not as easily.

### Can TB be cured?

Yes, almost always, but only if a full course of at least six months' treatment is taken.

### Will I have to be in hospital if I have TB?

No, although you may be admitted briefly to confirm the diagnosis.

### What is the treatment for TB?

TB must be treated with at least three antibiotics at the start. These can be combined in a single tablet. They are called ISONIAZID, RIFAMPICIN, PYRAZINAMIDE (may be combined as RIFATER).

The number of tablets depends on your weight. Because drug resistance is becoming a problem your doctor may give a fourth antibiotic called ETHAMBUTOL.

After 2 months or when the bacteria have been tested against the antibiotics you are being given, the treatment can be reduced to two antibiotics, ISONIAZID & RIFAMPICIN (may be combined as Rifinah).

### Can these tablets cause side effects?

Rifampicin will turn urine and other body secretions such as tears orange red.

It also interacts with other medicines, in particular, it reduces the effectiveness of the contraceptive pill. It is therefore important to warn your doctor when prescribing any other medicines that you are on TB treatment.

The tablets may rarely cause some of these:

- Rash
- Sickness
- Pins and needles



- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes). If you notice this, stop taking all your TB medicine and seek medical attention immediately.

If they do, get in touch with the TB nurse or doctor.

### What about close contacts who may be infected?

You will be asked by the specialist TB nurse to make a list of people you spend most time with. They will be asked to go for screening at the chest clinic. This may include a blood test or skin test, and/or a chest x-ray.

### Can TB be prevented?

There is a vaccine against TB called the BCG but it does not prevent TB in all cases. In the UK it is routinely offered to all secondary school children between the ages of 10 and 14. It may be offered to babies at special risk of TB.

### Is it worth having BCG in adult age or when travelling?

If you are planning to visit/stay for more than one month in a country with a high prevalence of TB, and you have not had Tuberculosis, you are advised to get a skin test to see if BCG is needed. You should visit your doctor in the first instance.

## I would like to be a friend to TB Alert in the following way(s) (Please appropriate box below)

### A. By making a donation

- Cheque enclosed for £.....(Payable to TB Alert)
- Please treat this and future donations as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK taxpayer.\*

Date: .....  
\* If you tick this box, TB Alert may claim 28.2p from the Inland Revenue for every pound donated, and if you are a higher rate taxpayer you may reclaim the difference between the low & high rate tax yourself. Please remember to notify us if you no longer pay income tax or capital gains tax equal to the basic rate of income tax.

- I wish to set up a regular donation – please send me a standing order form
- I plan to leave money to TB Alert in my will.

### B. By becoming a volunteer

I am particularly interested in being involved in:

- Advocacy and press/media work
- Fundraising in my local area
- Challenging or sporting events
- Being interviewed by the press (Patients/ex-patients only)
- Assisting with administrative tasks

Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS

Date: ..... Title Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms or other: .....  
(Please circle appropriate)

Surname: .....

First Name(s): .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Telephone: .....

Fax: .....

E-mail: .....

- TB Alert will keep your details on our database and send you updates on our work. We will not inundate you with mail! If you would prefer not to hear from us at all, please tick here.
- Please tick here if you do not wish TB Alert to pass your name on to other, like-minded organisations

### What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial infection mostly found in the lungs but which can affect any part of the body such as the brain, lymph glands and bones. Only TB of the lungs or throat may be infectious.

### How may TB affect me?

Patients with TB may have some of these:

- A cough, producing phlegm and even blood
- Loss of weight
- Feeling generally unwell
- Sweats at night
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath.

TB in other parts of the body can cause pain and swelling. In children and rarely in adults, TB can cause meningitis.

### How is TB diagnosed?

You will be asked to give a sputum sample in which the bacterium causing tuberculosis, if present, may be seen under the microscope or grown on a culture medium in the laboratory. In some circumstances, you may be offered a chest X-ray, skin test or blood test.