

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TUBERCULOSIS

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What is tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis is a disease caused by bacteria. The bacteria usually attack the lungs but can attack any part of the body.

There are 2 kinds of tuberculosis:

- Active tuberculosis. (You feel sick and you can give it to others.)
- Latent tuberculosis. (You do not feel sick and it does not spread to others. Some people with latent tuberculosis infection get active tuberculosis later on.)

How does tuberculosis spread?

Tuberculosis is spread through the air. This happens when a person with active tuberculosis disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. People nearby may catch it.

How is tuberculosis found?

A doctor can check for tuberculosis by doing a skin test called a purified protein derivative (PPD). A PPD skin test shows if you have been infected with the tuberculosis bacteria.

If your PPD skin test is positive, it means you have been infected. Your doctor will check you and give you a chest X-ray. This will help your doctor know if you have active tuberculosis that can spread to other people. Keep in mind that most people who have a positive skin test do not have active tuberculosis.

What are the symptoms of tuberculosis?

Symptoms of active tuberculosis in the lungs include:

- A new cough that lasts 2 to 3 weeks or longer
- Weight loss



- Coughing up blood or mucus
- Weakness or feeling tired
- Fever and chills
- Night sweats

If not treated properly, tuberculosis can be deadly. But usually, active tuberculosis can be cured by taking several medicines for a long time.

People with latent tuberculosis can take medicine to keep from getting active tuberculosis.

For More Information

Web Sites With Information on Tuberculosis

www.cdc.gov/tb/faqs/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tuberculosis.html

National Library of Medicine

familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common.html

American Academy of Family Physicians

www.lungusa.org/site/c.dvLUK900E/b.4294231/k.7AE3/Lung_Diseases_A_to_Z.htm

American Lung Association

ACP

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