



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

What is TB?

TB is a contagious infection caused by a bacteria. It involves the lungs, but can also involve other organs.

How is TB spread?

TB may be spread through the following ways:

- A person with an **active** TB infection can pass the infection to others through air-borne droplets caused by sneezing or coughing.
- A person with a **latent** (non-active) TB infection can not pass the disease to others and has no symptoms.

What are possible symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Cough
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Night sweats
- Coughing up blood
- Unintended weight loss
- Wheezing
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing

How is TB diagnosed?

Tests include chest x-ray and sputum tests.

What is the treatment for TB?

Active TB infection is treated with a combination of several drugs. Treatment usually continues for 6 months or longer. A person must be kept isolated from others until the contagious period has passed.

Latent TB infection is treated for nine months with a single antibiotic. Most people with latent tuberculosis do not develop active TB, especially those who take the drug for the full nine months.

How can I prevent TB?

TB is preventable. People such as health care workers and those with certain types of chronic health problems should receive a skin test. Anyone who has been exposed to someone with active TB should also receive a skin test. If a person has a positive skin test it is very important that they have proper evaluation and treatment. Prompt treatment of active TB can help control the spread of the disease.

For more information on tuberculosis:

Ottawa County Health Department

www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/faqs/pdfs/qa.pdf>

Phone: (888) 246-2675

Medline Plus/National Institutes of Health

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000077.htm>