



**WE'RE HERE
TO HELP..**

CALIFORNIA

For after hours or weekend assistance, call our nursing hotline at **1.800.797.1717**.

FLORIDA

If you have any questions, please call your Nurse Care Manager at **1.800.832.0778**.

TUBERCULOSIS



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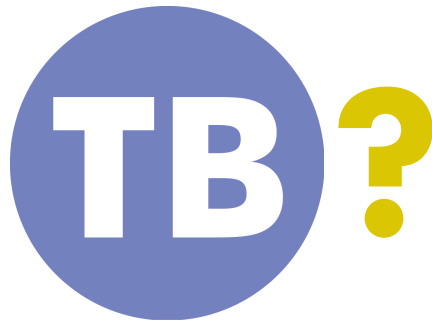


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What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis, or “TB” is a bacterial infection that can spread through your body, but is usually found in the lungs. Most people exposed to TB actually never develop symptoms since the bacteria can live in an inactive form within the body.

Medication can be given to help get rid of the inactive bacteria and prevent it from reactivating. However, if the immune system weakens, such as in people with HIV, the bacteria can activate. In their active state, TB bacteria causes death of tissue in the infected organs, possibly resulting in death.



How Risky is TB?

The risk of developing TB disease is much greater for those living with HIV/AIDS, because HIV weakens the immune system. People with HIV have a 100 times greater risk of developing active TB disease and becoming infectious. Dormant TB infections can become active, so even with inactive TB disease, people without symptoms should receive medical treatment.

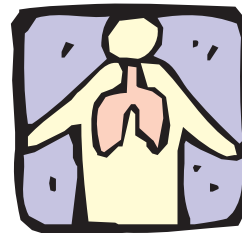
What Causes It?

TB is generally caused by exposure to microscopic airborne droplets containing the bacterium (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.) Because TB is transmitted through the air, it can be quite contagious. However, it is nearly impossible to catch TB simply by passing an infected person on the street. Because most people with TB exhale only a few of these germs with each breath, you can contract the disease only if you are exposed to a person with active TB disease for a long time.

The active form of TB is more likely to occur in people with weakened immune systems, such as those with AIDS, or blood cancers, such as leukemia.

How is the Testing Done?

If the disease is inactive, you will generally have no symptoms. You may not even be aware that you have TB until a skin test. The Mantoux skin test performed by your healthcare provider is the most reliable way to tell if you have TB. A small amount of liquid is injected just under the top layer of your skin on your arm. After two to three days, a doctor or nurse will read the test to see if it's positive. A hard, red welt at the injection site indicates a positive test. A positive test means that you have been infected with TB at some point. An X-ray of your lungs will show if TB is active.



LOOK FOR THESE SYMPTOMS OF ACTIVE TB:

- Sensation of not feeling well
- Cough, at first with yellow or green mucus and occasionally bloody later in the disease.
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Weight loss
- Slight fever, night sweats
- Pain in the chest, back, or kidneys, and perhaps all three

Call Your Doctor If:

- You have any of the symptoms listed for active TB, especially if you live in crowded conditions or are malnourished.
- You know you have been exposed to someone with active TB.

All people infected with HIV should be tested for TB. If you are infected with TB, you should have complete preventive therapy as soon as possible to prevent TB disease from developing.