



What you need to know about...

Tuberculosis (TB)

TB is a disease that mostly affects the lungs, but can affect other parts of the body. It is caused by small germs (called bacteria) in the air that you can breathe into the lungs. The bacteria is spread from person to person through the air by a cough, sneeze, laugh, shout, or speech.

What puts you at risk for getting TB?

The longer you breathe the air with TB germs, the greater you are at risk. Being around someone with an active case of TB in crowded closed areas with poor ventilation can increase the risk of infection. Other risks are substance abuse, HIV infection, history of having TB, diabetes, and other chronic diseases that weaken the immune system.

What are the symptoms or signs of TB?

The common symptoms are:

- Chest pain
- Cough for three or more weeks
- Night sweats
- Feeling tired or weak
- Loss of appetite
- Unexpected weight loss

What is the difference between infection and actual TB disease?

When you are only infected (latent) with the TB germ, the germ may be asleep for an unknown amount of time, during which you are not contagious or actively sick with TB. Active TB Disease can be contagious.

How do I find out if I have TB?

You can find out if you are infected with TB by having a skin test. If you test positive, you likely have TB infection, and the doctor will do more tests, usually a chest x-ray, to find out if you have active TB disease.

What is the treatment for TB?

TB is curable with medication and medical attention. If you have TB infection (latent), you should also receive treatment to prevent you from getting sick in the future.

If you or someone you know has been around someone who has confirmed active TB disease:

If you or someone you know has a cough, cover your mouth and get a TB skin test performed by your doctor or at a local clinic.