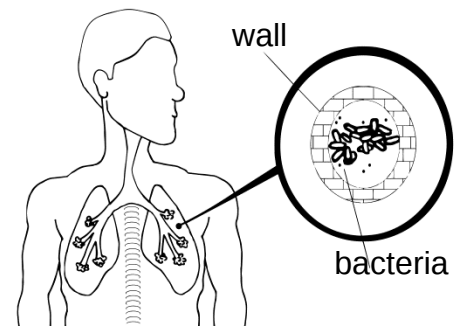


TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria that are spread from person to person through the air. It usually affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys or the spine. Tuberculosis is preventable and curable. Tuberculosis is also known as TB.

How does a person get tuberculosis?

When a person with TB disease in his/her lungs coughs or sneezes, the TB bacteria are released into the air. Another person can then breathe the TB bacteria into his/her lungs. A person who breathes in the TB bacteria can become infected. This is called TB infection.



TB infection is also known as Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI). When a person has TB infection, the TB bacteria have entered the body, but they are not growing and are dormant, or latent. With TB infection, a person does not feel sick and cannot give the TB bacteria to other people. A person with TB infection may develop TB disease in the future.

Can I be tested for TB infection?

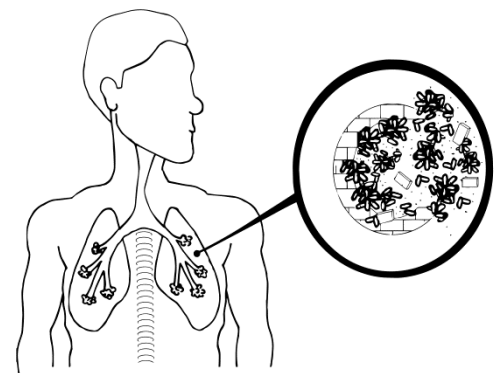
A tuberculin skin test is the most common test for TB infection. Anyone with a positive skin test should have a chest x-ray and medical assessment to rule out TB disease.

Is there a treatment for TB infection?

Your health care provider may recommend medicine to prevent you from developing TB disease. Isoniazid (INH) is the medicine that is most often used, usually for 9 months. The medications are provided to you free of charge.

How does a person develop TB disease?

A person develops TB disease when his/her immune system cannot stop the TB bacteria from growing. This happens when a person is sick, stressed, not eating well or has other illnesses such as cancer, diabetes or HIV/AIDS. With TB disease, the bacteria are growing, the person feels sick and the bacteria can be spread to other people.



What are the symptoms of TB disease?

A person with TB disease may have the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Fatigue
- Night sweats
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss

How do I know if I have TB disease?

Only a health care provider can tell if you have TB disease. A chest x-ray and sputum samples will help show if you have the disease in your lungs. Other tests may be necessary to find out if TB disease is in other parts of the body.

How is TB disease treated?

TB disease can be treated and cured. Treatment usually involves taking antibiotics for at least 6 months. These antibiotics must be taken every day to make sure that the person does not get sicker and to prevent the TB bacteria from becoming stronger or resistant to the medication.

Is the medication safe?

Yes. Only a few people have side effects. Your health care provider and public health nurse will talk to you about possible side effects of the medication. Regular blood tests are needed to check for side effects. Tell your health care provider if you do not feel well while you are taking your TB medicine. The medications are provided to you free of charge.

What is the role of Ottawa Public Health?

Ottawa Public Health is involved with all people who have TB disease. A Public Health Nurse (PHN) will help with the TB medications, medical appointments and support during the TB treatment. A PHN will also arrange for testing contacts (family, friends or others) who have been exposed to someone with infectious TB disease.

If you have any other questions about tuberculosis please call Ottawa Public Health, at 613-580-6744 or visit the following websites:

Ottawa Public Health:

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/tuberculosis.aspx>

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/disease/tuber.aspx>