

HOW DOES TB SPREAD FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER?

TB is spread by breathing in germs that someone with TB had coughed out. Not everyone who breathes this air will catch TB. Generally a person has to breath the same air for a long time in order to catch TB. For example, it is unlikely that you can catch TB on the subway or bus even if a person coughing next to you has TB. You are more likely to catch TB if you live in the same apartment or otherwise spend a lot of time indoors with someone who has untreated TB.

IF SOMEONE COUGHS NEAR YOU, CAN YOU GET TB?

A person who coughs near you cannot give you TB unless that person had TB and is not being treated with TB medication.

IS TB A HEREDITARY DISEASE?

No. It has nothing to do with genetics.



IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO AVOID GETTING TB?

The best way to avoid getting TB is to encourage anyone you know who might have TB to see a doctor so that he or she can be treated. Once a person is treated for TB they are unlikely to give TB to you unless they stop taking their medicines. Symptoms of tuberculosis include:

- **Cough**
- **Chest pain**
- **Coughing up blood or bloody sputum**
- **Nausea**
- **Fatigue**
- **Weakness**
- **Rapid weight loss**
- **Fever**
- **Night sweats**



TB FACTS AND TREATMENT SIDE EFFECTS

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WHAT IS TB?

TB stands for the disease tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is caused by an infection with the germ *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. This germ is a bacteria. TB usually occurs as pneumonia, but TB can also occur in the brain, back, knee, lymph nodes, or other organs and bones.

CAN TB KILL YOU?

Yes, TB can kill people if they are not treated. They can also infect others if they are not treated promptly. With proper treatment, almost everyone with TB can be cured.

IF SOMEONE GETS TB, CAN IT TREATED EASILY?

Yes, TB can usually be treated easily. However a person with TB must take the proper medications for many months (usually at least six months). If a TB patient stops the medication early or misses many doses of medicine then the TB can come back. The kind of TB that comes back can be more difficult to treat.

HOW IS TB TREATED?

TB is usually treated with four medicines once a day. The medicines are usually isoniazid, rifampin, ethambutol and pyrazinamide. Most people are also given vitamin B-6. Depending on how the medicine have been prescribed, the doctor treating TB may stop the ethambutol and pyrazinamide after the first two months of treatment.

HOW LONG DOES TB NEED TO BE TREATED FOR?

Most of the time TB is treated for six to nine months. Some types of TB need to be treated even longer. It is very important that people with TB not stop their treatment before this time even if they are feeling better. TB that is not treated long enough can come back. When the TB returns, it may be harder to treat.

WHAT ARE TB TREATMENT SIDE EFFECTS?

Although TB drugs used are safe, occasionally some patients on treatment complain of side effects related to the TB drugs taken. The most common complaint is skin itchiness and this is easily treated and resolves quickly. Another effect usually noted is the color of the urine, sweat & tears turns reddish and this is due to one of the drugs (Rifampicin) being present in these secretions. This colour change is harmless and does not indicate any organ damage. A small proportion of patients on TB treatment may complain of symptoms such as jaundice, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, blurred vision, easy bleeding or dizziness. In these patients, the doctor will adjust the dosage of the TB medication or change the TB medication so that these side effects do not recur. The important lesson is that TB patients should report any suspected side effects of TB medication immediately to the treating clinic so that appropriate treatment can be given by the doctor. TB patients are strongly advised NOT to stop or adjust the TB medication by themselves as this could lead to more severe treatment complications.