

TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is curable and preventable disease, which mainly spreads from person to person through the air. Tuberculosis predominantly affects adults in their productive years. However, all age groups are at risk.

KEY FACTS

Tuberculosis:

- is curable and preventable disease caused by bacteria (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) that most often affect the lungs;
- spreads from person to person through the air. When people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air. A person needs to inhale only a few of these germs to become infected.
- About one-quarter of the world's population has latent TB, which means people have been infected by TB bacteria but are not (yet) ill with the disease and cannot transmit the disease.
- People infected with TB bacteria have a 5-15% lifetime risk of falling ill with TB. Persons with compromised immune systems, such as people living with HIV, malnutrition or diabetes, or people who use tobacco, have a higher risk of falling ill.
- In 2018, an estimated 10 million people fell ill with TB worldwide and a total of 1.5 million people died from TB in 2018 (including 251,000 people with HIV).
- TB can be diagnosed easily through rapid test called, Xpert MTB/RIF®. The test simultaneously detects TB and resistance to rifampicin, the most important TB medicine.
- People living with HIV are 19 (15-22) times more likely to develop active TB disease than people without HIV. HIV and TB form a lethal combination, each speeding the other's progress.



HEALTH RISKS

- Tuberculosis mostly affects adults in their productive years. However, all age groups are at risk. Over 95% of cases and deaths are in developing countries.
- People who are infected with HIV are 19 times more likely to develop active TB.
- The risk of active TB is also greater in persons suffering from other conditions that impair the immune system. People with undernutrition are 3 times more at risk.
- Alcohol use disorder and tobacco smoking increase the risk of TB disease by a factor of 3.3 and 1.6, respectively.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of TB disease depend on where in the body the TB bacteria are growing. TB bacteria usually grow in the lungs (pulmonary TB). Symptoms of TB disease in other parts of the body depend on the area affected.

TB disease in the lungs may cause symptoms such as:

- a bad cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer
- pain in the chest
- coughing up blood or sputum (phlegm from deep inside the lungs).

Other symptoms of TB disease are:

- weakness or fatigue
- weight loss
- no appetite
- chills
- fever
- sweating at night.

TREATMENT

- TB is a treatable and curable disease. Active, drug-susceptible TB disease is treated with a standard 6-month course of 4 antimicrobial drugs that are provided with information and support to the patient by a health worker or trained volunteer. Without such support, treatment adherence is more difficult.
- Between 2000 and 2018, an estimated 58 million lives were saved through TB diagnosis and treatment.

PREVENTION

- BCG vaccine offers excellent protection among children against the disseminated forms of TB. But protection against pulmonary TB in adults is variable.
- TB drug treatment for prevention also known as chemoprophylaxis can reduce the risk of a first episode of active TB. Many people who have latent TB infection may never develop TB disease. But some people with latent infection are more likely to develop TB disease than others, like people with HIV infection or other immune deficient conditions, people who became infected with TB bacteria in the last 2 years and people who were not treated correctly for TB in past. If you have latent TB infection and you are in one of these high-risk groups, you should take medicine to prevent developing TB disease.
- Preventing TB transmission in households.

As medical advancement is always happening the ITF will periodically update this information, as necessary. You can also keep yourself updated on Tuberculosis infection from WHO website at:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis>



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