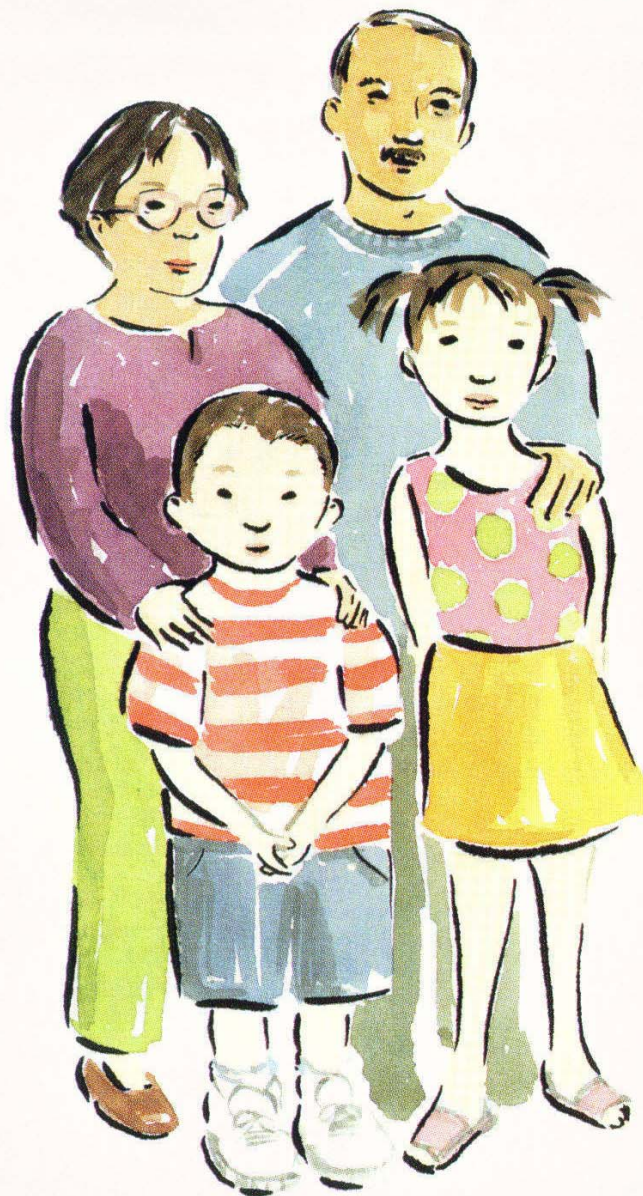


What You Should Know About Tuberculosis (TB)



*Developed by Association of Asian Pacific
Community Health Organizations
(AAPCHO)*

Facts about TB

People of all ages, all nationalities and all incomes can get tuberculosis. Each year over 23,000 people in the United States get TB. Today, however, with modern medicine, *TB can be cured*. If you are not a citizen of the United States and you have TB, you will get medical treatment. You will not have to leave this country.

What is TB?

Tuberculosis or TB for short is caused by a bacteria called tuberculosis bacilli. It is a disease that can damage your lungs or other parts of your body and cause serious illness.



How is TB spread?

TB is spread when people who have active TB germs in their lungs cough, sneeze or spit on the sidewalk and send the germs into the air. People who breathe these germs into their lungs can become infected.

To get TB, you usually need exposure to someone who has the germs. Most people get TB from someone they spend a lot of time with, like a family member, spouse, friend or close co-worker.

You are ***not likely*** to get TB from someone coughing in the bus or at a restaurant. It is **not** spread by shaking hands, sharing dishes, utensils, drinking glasses or clothing.

What are the signs and symptoms of TB?

TB can attack any part of the body, but the lungs are the most common target. A person with TB disease may begin to feel some or all of the following symptoms:

- constant tiredness
- fevers
- weight loss
- cough a lot
- wet cough
- night sweats
- loss of appetite
- dry cough
- spit up blood
- chest pain

What does having “TB infection” mean?

Having a TB infection means that the TB germs are in the body but they are in an “inactive” state. After TB germs enter the body, in most cases, body defenses control the germs by building a wall around them the way a scab forms over a cut. The germs can stay alive inside these walls for years in an “inactive” state. While TB germs are “inactive”, they cannot hurt you, and they cannot spread to other people. You are infected by the germs, but you are not sick. You probably will not even know you’re infected. Millions of Americans have TB infections. For most of them, the germs will always be “inactive”. But without TB treatment, there would be lifelong risk of developing TB disease.

What is TB disease?

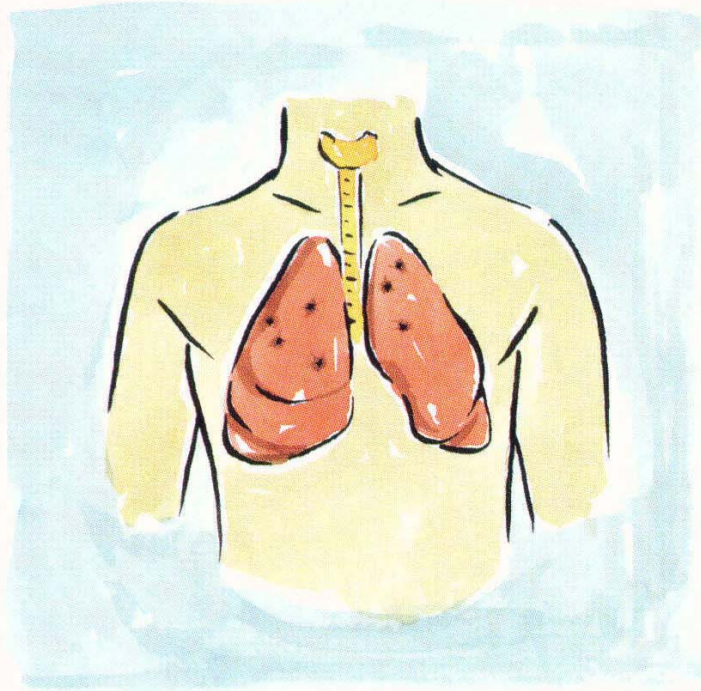
TB disease is a serious illness caused by “active” TB germs. It is possible to get TB disease shortly after the germs enter the body if body defenses are weak. It is also possible, even after many years, for “inactive” TB germs to become active when body defenses are weakened. This may be due to aging, a serious illness, drug or alcohol abuse, or HIV infection. When defenses are weakened and inactive TB germs become active, the germs can then break out of the

walls, begin multiplying and damage the lungs or other organs of the body and infect other persons.

What are the tests for TB?

1. Tuberculin Skin Test (PPD): tells if TB germs are in the body. A small amount of fluid is put under the skin on the arm. Two or three days later, the spot on the arm will be checked. If there is little or no change, TB germs have not entered the body. If the spot is red and swollen, a person may have TB germs inside. However, it is very important that this person has to have a chest-x-ray to confirm.





2. Chest x-ray: if TB is present, it is probably in the lungs. A chest x-ray takes a picture of the lungs and shows the doctor if there are any signs of TB. You will not feel anything when the x-ray is taken. The x-ray is harmless.

3. Sputum test: shows if TB germs are in the thick liquid when a person coughs up.

Who should get tested for TB?

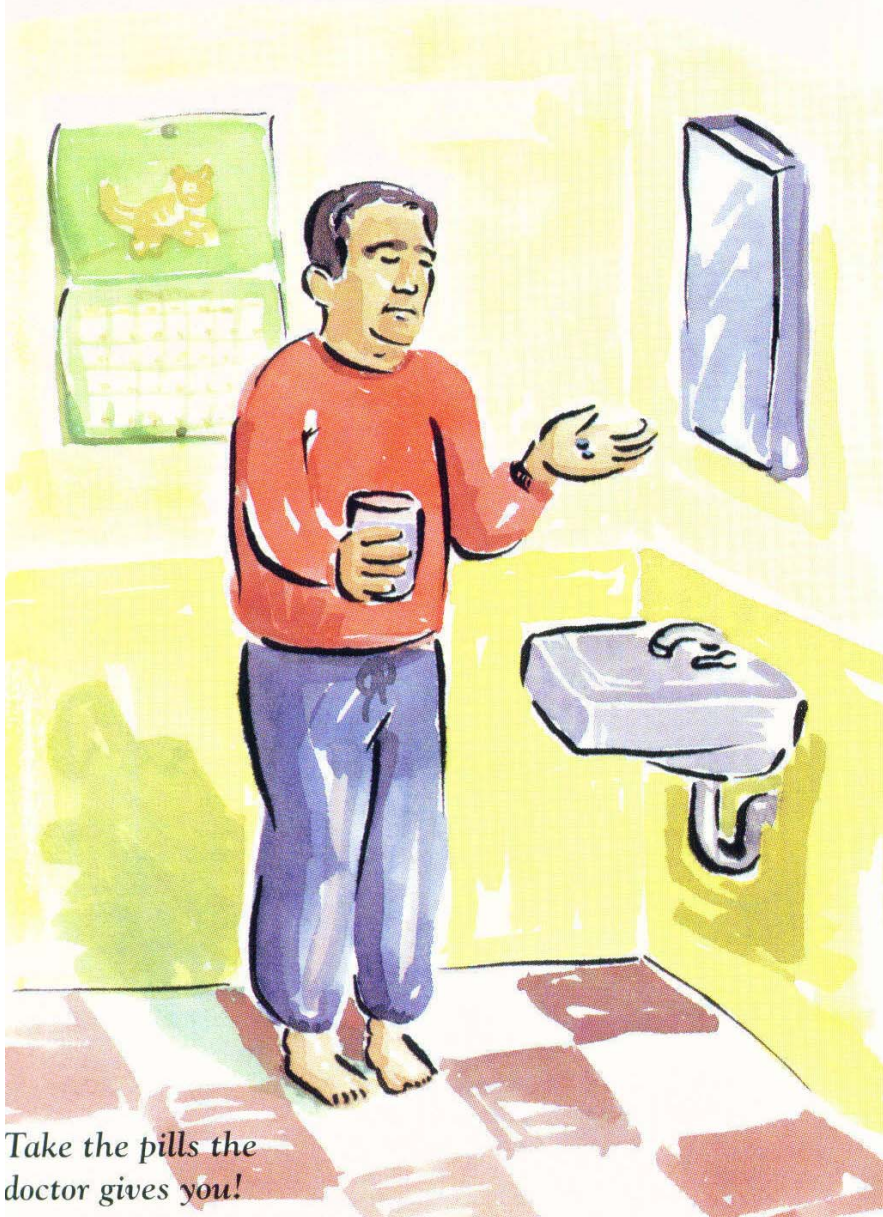
- people who have had exposure to someone who has active TB germs
- people who have symptoms of TB
- people who are required to for employment or school
- people who have weak immunity or certain medical conditions
- foreign born and elderly from areas where TB is common

How TB is cured

There are medicines to fight TB. These may be pills, liquid to drink, or shots. TB can only be cured if a patient is taking his pills as prescribed by a doctor.

Why are pills important?

If a patient stops taking his pills without the doctor's permission, TB can come back. When TB returns, it can be worse than before. The germs can grow stronger and more stubborn. Take the pills the doctor gives you.



*Take the pills the
doctor gives you!*

The clinic

Most patients who don't go to the hospital should visit a clinic regularly. Hospital patients after they come home, they need to go to a clinic every few months as instructed by the doctor for follow-up. A clinic visit may take an hour or more. But clinic visits are very important. They help to speed up the patient's recovery.

For more information about TB testing and treatment, please contact your local health clinic:

Clinic address, phone # and clinic hours:

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