

What do I need to know about Latent Tuberculosis Infection?

*How can I have TB?
I don't even feel sick.*

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

TB is a contagious airborne disease that is caused by a special bacterium (germ). The germs are coughed or sneezed into the air by someone who is sick with active TB. You can only catch TB by breathing in this germ.

TB has two stages. **You have the first stage—latent or inactive infection:**

- You have dormant (sleeping) TB germs in your body.
- You are not sick, and you have no symptoms.
- You cannot give the germs to anyone else.

Some people go on to a second stage—**active TB disease**. People with active TB disease:

- Have many active TB germs in their bodies.
- Are sick and may have symptoms like cough, fever, and weight loss.
- Need to see a doctor.
- Can give TB germs to others.

Some people experience side effects from TB medication. If you notice one or more of these side effects, do not take your pills and call us right away! TB Clinic: 415-206-8524

- Continued loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dark-colored urine (the color of coffee or tea)
- Yellow eyes
- Yellow skin
- Rash
- Itching
- High fever
- Blurred vision
- Tingling or numbness of fingers or toes
- Other unusual symptoms

What about drinking alcohol and taking INH?

INH is processed mainly through the liver. Drinking alcohol is hard on your liver. While you are taking INH, it is best to avoid all alcohol. Your liver can be checked while you are taking INH.

- Isoniazid (INH) _____
- Pyridoxine (Vitamin B6) _____
- Rifampin _____
- Rifamate (INH and Rifampin) _____
- _____

If you forget to take your medicine one day, do **NOT** take two doses the next day. Just continue taking the prescribed dose.

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How do I know if I am infected with TB germs?

Only your doctor can tell if you have TB. First you will be given either the old skin test or the new blood test. A positive skin or blood test means TB germs are in your body—*Latent TB Infection*. If you have a positive test, you will need a chest x-ray to find out if the germs have caused any damage in your lungs—*Active TB Disease*. You may be asked to cough up sputum (mucus) from your lungs to check for TB germs.



You are not contagious.

People with latent tuberculosis infection **CANNOT** spread the disease to other people.



Tuberculosis disease is preventable.

If you have been infected with the germs, you are at a higher risk of becoming sick with tuberculosis. This can happen right away or up to many years later.

You can prevent TB by taking medicine called Isoniazid (INH). INH is easy to take. It is safe and kills the tuberculosis germ. Your doctor may prescribe other, similar medicine.

What can I do to prevent active tuberculosis?

The most important thing you can do is to take your TB medicine! Take your TB medication as often as your doctor says.



- Keep your appointment with your nurse or your doctor
- Notify the TB clinic if you can't make an appointment or are traveling
- Tell the doctor or nurse if you are pregnant or taking any other medications or have any other health problems
- Take your pills at the same time every day. Include it in a daily routine
- Return to the doctor or nurse every month for a refill or as scheduled.
- Never give your medicine to anyone else
- Avoid alcohol