

Tuberculosis (TB) Education and Self Evaluation

1. How TB Spreads

TB bacteria are spread through the air from one person to another. The TB bacteria are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, speaks, or sings. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

TB is **NOT** spread by:

- shaking someone's hand
- sharing food or drink
- touching bed linens or toilet seats
- sharing toothbrushes
- kissing

When a person breathes in TB bacteria, the bacteria can settle in the lungs and begin to grow. From there, they can move through the blood to other parts of the body, such as the kidney, spine, and brain.

TB disease in the lungs or throat can be infectious. This means that the bacteria can be spread to other people. TB in other parts of the body, such as the kidney or spine, is usually not infectious.

People with TB disease are most likely to spread it to people they spend time with every day. This includes family members, friends, and coworkers or schoolmates.

2. Signs & 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). 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

Symptoms of TB disease in other parts of the body depend on the area affected.

People who have latent TB infection not feel sick, do not have any symptoms, and cannot spread TB to others.

3. TB Risk Factors

Some people develop TB disease soon after becoming infected (within weeks) before their immune system can fight the TB bacteria. Other people may get sick years later, when their immune system becomes weak for another reason.

Overall, about 5 to 10% of infected persons who do not receive treatment for latent TB infection will develop TB disease at some time in their lives. For persons whose immune systems are weak, especially those with HIV infection, the risk of developing TB disease is much higher than for persons with normal immune systems.

Generally, persons at high risk for developing TB disease fall into two categories:

- Persons who have been recently infected with TB bacteria
- Persons with medical conditions that weaken the immune system

Persons who have been Recently Infected with TB Bacteria

This includes:

- Close contacts of a person with infectious TB disease
- Persons who have immigrated from areas of the world with high rates of TB
- Children less than 5 years of age who have a positive TB test
- Groups with high rates of TB transmission, such as homeless persons, injection drug users, and persons with HIV infection
- Persons who work or reside with people who are at high risk for TB in facilities or institutions such as hospitals, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and residential homes for those with HIV

Persons with Medical Conditions that Weaken the Immune System

Babies and young children often have weak immune systems. Other people can have weak immune systems, too, especially people with any of these conditions:

- HIV infection (the virus that causes AIDS)
- Substance abuse
- Silicosis
- Diabetes mellitus
- Severe kidney disease
- Low body weight
- Organ transplants
- Head and neck cancer
- Medical treatments such as corticosteroids or organ transplant
- Specialized treatment for rheumatoid arthritis or Crohn’s disease

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) Self Evaluation

Please review the list below and indicate whether you have experienced any of these symptoms.

	YES	NO
1. Persistent low grade fever	_____	_____
2. Swollen glands often in the neck	_____	_____
3. Loss of appetite	_____	_____
4. Weight loss without dieting	_____	_____
5. Productive cough for more than 3 weeks	_____	_____
6. Shortness of breath	_____	_____
7. Chest pain	_____	_____
8. Coughing up blood	_____	_____
9. Night sweats	_____	_____
10. Recurrent kidney or bladder infections	_____	_____

Employee Printed Name

Employee Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date