

Facts about tuberculosis



Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by germs known as mycobacterium tuberculosis or “turbecle bacilli”. Tuberculosis (TB) most commonly affects the lungs but also can involve almost any organ of the body.

Tuberculosis Causes

All cases of TB are passed from person to person via droplets. When someone with TB infection coughs, sneezes, or talks, tiny droplets of saliva or mucus are expelled into the air, which can be inhaled by another person.

Risk factors for TB include the following:



HIV infection

Low socioeconomic status

Alcoholism

Homelessness

Crowded living conditions

Diseases that weaken the immune system

Migration from a country with a high number of cases

Health-care workers

HIV/AIDS & TB

There are several important associations between epidemics of HIV and tuberculosis:

- Tuberculosis is harder to diagnose in HIV positive people
- Tuberculosis progresses faster in HIV-infected people
- Tuberculosis in HIV positive people is more likely to be fatal if undiagnosed or left untreated
- Tuberculosis occurs earlier in the course of HIV infection than other opportunistic infections

- Tuberculosis is the only major AIDS-related opportunistic infection that poses a risk to HIV negative people

Tuberculosis treatment and HIV

It is vitally important for people with HIV to have treatment if they have active TB. This will cure them and prevent transmission to others. Even in settings where antiretroviral drugs are unavailable or inaccessible, it is crucial that the health system is able to offer HIV positive people the simple antibiotics needed for DOTS. Isoniazid Prevention Therapy (IPT) is a treatment given to persons living with HIV to help reduce the chances of them developing TB disease. IPT is important because the drug given kills the “sleeping” TB germs. This decreases the chance of developing TB disease.

TB and HIV/AIDS are a Workplace issue

A sick worker means a disrupted workflow, reduced productivity, weeks or months of absenteeism, and potentially the direct cost of treatment. For employers TB and HIV/AIDS interrupt the workflow, lowers productivity and raises both direct cost related to treatment and care and indirect costs such as the replacement and retraining of workers.

TB and HIV/AIDS are workplace issues because health is essential not only to the well being of individuals but the functioning of economies.

How can we prevent the spread of TB?

- When coughing or sneezing cover your mouth and nose to avoid spreading the germs in the air around you.
- Take your tablets as prescribed by the health care provider
- Attend all your clinic check-ups as advised by the health worker or treatment supporter or treatment supporter.
- Open windows in houses, schools, offices, public transport and in other places to let in fresher air and sunlight.
- Avoid staying in crowded and poorly ventilated places.
- Children should be given BCG vaccine at birth
- Practice healthy lifestyle habits to improve your immunity (eating a balanced diet, exercising and resting)
- People who have been in close contact with a TB patient should be screened for TB.