

Tuberculosis: What You Need to Know

What is Tuberculosis?

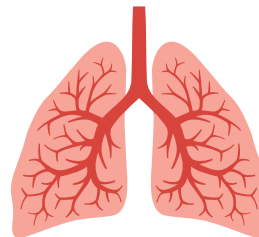
Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial disease that spreads from person to person through air. Each year, **10 million people** become sick with **TB** worldwide.

Basic Facts

- **TB** germs can enter the air when someone with **active TB** in their lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings
- These germs can linger in the air. Breathing in air with **TB** germs can lead to a **latent TB** infection (which is **inactive TB**)

Symptoms

- General symptoms of **TB** include feelings of sickness or weakness, weight loss, chills, fever, and night sweats
- Although **TB** usually affects the lungs, it can also affect the brain, kidneys, or spine
- The symptoms of **TB** of the lungs also include coughing that lasts for 3 weeks or longer, chest pain, and coughing up blood



What is the difference between Latent TB infection and TB disease?

Latent TB infection

- Many people who have **latent (inactive) TB infection** never develop **active TB disease**. **Latent TB** can remain inactive for a lifetime without causing disease.
- But in some people, especially those with a weak immune system, the bacteria can become active, multiply, and **cause active TB disease**.

TB Disease

- **TB** bacteria can become active if the immune system can't stop them from multiplying. When **TB** bacteria are actively multiplying, this is called **TB disease**. People with **TB disease** are sick. They may also be able to spread the bacteria to people they spend time with every day.

Treatment

- **TB** can almost always be treated and cured with medications.