

SHARE WITH WOMEN



What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infection caused by bacteria. It usually affects the lungs, but it can also cause problems in other parts of the body.

I Do Not Know Anyone with TB. Is it a Big Problem in the United States?

TB is most common in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Still, there are more than 10 million people in the United States with TB. Thousands of new cases of TB are reported every year. In the United States, more than 80% of all TB infections occur in persons who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups.

What are the Symptoms of TB?

The symptoms of TB are:

- A bad cough that lasts 3 weeks or more
- Pain in the chest
- Coughing up blood
- Feeling weak or tired
- Loss of appetite
- Chills, fever, or sweating at night

We are lucky that we have medicines to cure TB now. But if a person who has TB does not take medicine, they can die.

How is TB Spread?

When a person who has TB breathes out, the bacteria go out into the air. People who breathe in the bacteria from the air into their lungs may become infected. TB is not spread by sharing food.

Does Everyone who Breathes in the TB Bacteria Get Sick?

No, most people do not get sick even if they become infected with TB. Some people will get latent TB. A person with latent TB has the bacteria in their body, but is not sick and cannot spread TB to others. A few people who breathe in the bacteria will become sick with TB. There is no way of knowing who will get sick and who will not.

Is There a Vaccine to Prevent TB?

In countries where TB is very common, small children may be given a vaccine to prevent severe TB. The vaccine is called Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG). It is not usually given in the United States.

How Can I Prevent TB?

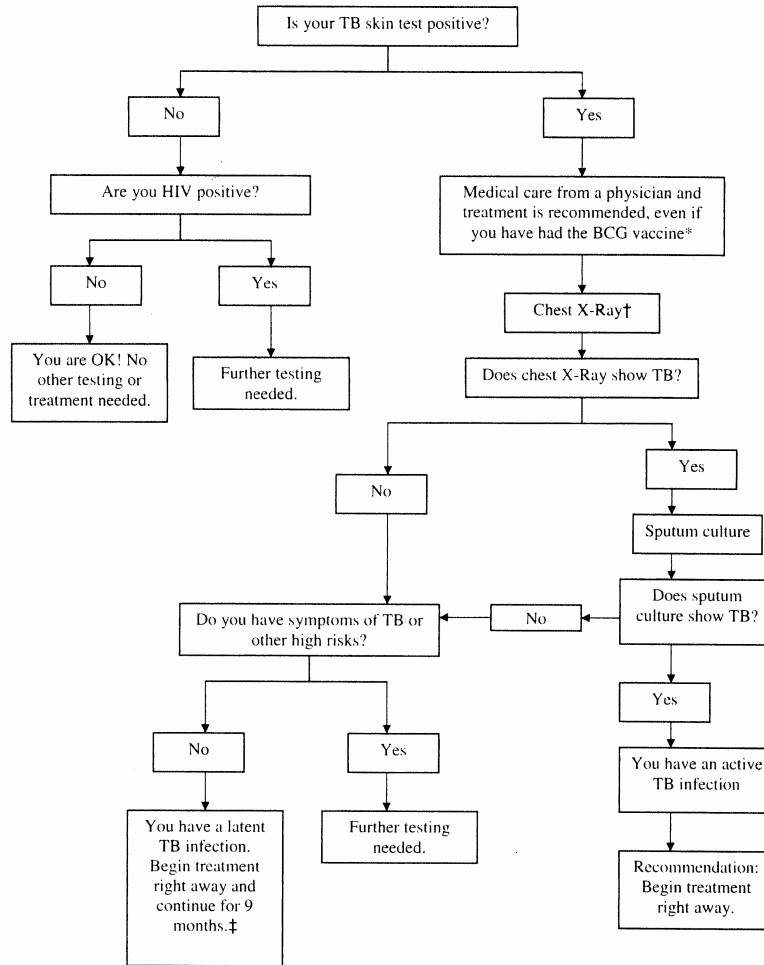
You can avoid getting TB by not having close contact or spending long periods of time around people who are sick with TB. People who are at high risk for TB should be tested and treated if they have the disease.

I Am Pregnant. Should I be Tested for TB?

TB testing is safe in pregnancy, and testing is recommended if you are in one of the following high risk groups:

- You have close contact with people who are sick with TB
- You have HIV/AIDS
- You inject illegal drugs
- You live in a high-risk place (prison, mental institution, or homeless shelter)
- You are a health care worker serving high-risk clients
- You were born in a country that has a high rate of TB and you came to the United States in the last 5 years
- Your health care provider has advised you to be tested

You can be tested even if you had the BCG vaccine (see chart on next page) when you were a child.



*Being treated for an active TB infection during pregnancy is MUCH less dangerous than going 9 months without treatment. If you are at risk, you should be tested.
 †It is safe to get a chest X-ray during pregnancy if your TB skin test is positive. The health care provider will shield your belly to protect your baby from the X-rays.
 ‡The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends an immediate chest X-ray and treatment of the latent infection during pregnancy, but your health care provider may suggest waiting until your pregnancy is over. Consulting with your local health department about your TB risks and discussing your plan of care with your health care provider is a good idea.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site:
www.cdc.gov/tb/pubs/TBfactsheets.htm

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