

TUBERCULOSIS FACTS – You Can Prevent TB

What is TB?

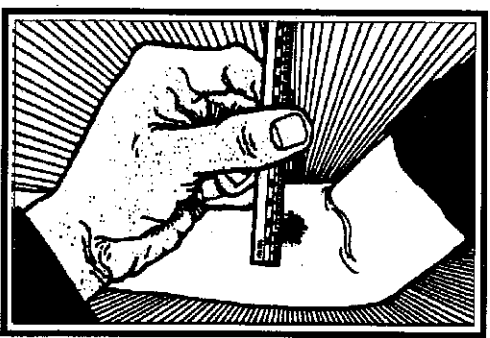


“TB” is short for a disease called tuberculosis. TB is spread by tiny germs that can float in the air. The TB germs may spray into the air if a person with **TB disease** of the lungs or throat coughs, shouts, or sneezes. Anyone nearby can breathe TB germs into their lungs.

TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. This is called **TB infection**. Your immune system traps TB germs with special germ fighters. Your germ fighters keep TB germs from making you sick.

But sometimes, the TB germs can break away and spread. Then they cause **TB disease**. The germs can attack the lungs or other parts of the body. They can go to the kidneys, the brain, or the spine. If people have **TB disease**, they need medical help. If they don't get help, they can die.

How do I know if I have TB infection?



A skin test is the only way to tell if you have **TB infection**. The test is “positive” if a bump about the size of a pencil eraser or bigger appears on your arm. This bump means you probably have **TB infection**.

What should I do if I have TB infection?

If you have **TB infection**, you may need treatment so you will not get **TB disease** later. This is called “preventive” treatment. Isoniazid (INH) is the anti-TB drug used most often.

(over)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

