

Tuberculosis (TB)

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What is TB?

Tuberculosis, or TB, is a disease caused by a germ (called the tubercle bacterium or *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*). TB usually affects the lungs, but can affect other parts of the body, such as the lymph nodes (glands), the bones and (rarely) the brain. Presence of the TB germ may not develop into TB disease.

What are the symptoms?

TB disease develops slowly in the body and it usually takes several months for symptoms to appear. Any of the following symptoms may suggest TB:

- Fever and night sweats
- Persistent cough
- Losing weight
- Blood in your sputum (phlegm or spit) at any time.

How do you catch it?

The TB germ is usually spread in the air. It is caught from another person who has TB of the lungs. The germ gets into the air when that person coughs or sneezes.

Can anyone get it?

Anyone can get TB. But it is difficult to catch. You are most at risk if someone living in the same house as you catches the disease, or a close friend has the disease. The following people have a greater chance of becoming ill with TB if exposed to it:

- Those in very close contact with infectious people
- Children
- Elderly people
- Diabetics
- People on steroids
- Those who are on other drugs affecting the body's defence system
- Those who are HIV-positive
- Those in overcrowded/poor housing
- Those who are dependent on drugs or alcohol
- Those with chronic poor health.

How is TB treated?

For many years now, good treatment for TB has been available.

The treatment is taken every day (usually tablets) for around six months. TB medication is provided free of charge.

If you are a known/suspected case of TB on admission to the hospital you will be nursed in a side room.

You may be required to wear a mask if you have to be taken out of your side room until it is clear that you have completed at least two weeks of TB treatment.

The decision to move you out of a side room will be taken by the supervising Respiratory Physician in conjunction with the Infection Prevention Team and Respiratory Nurse Specialists.

How important is treatment?

Treatment is vital. If you have TB disease, or if you have been infected with the germ but have not yet become unwell, you must take the treatment as directed. It is very important to complete the full course of treatment as it will stop you being infectious and it will remove the risk of you developing drug-resistant TB.

Will I have to stay in hospital until my TB is cleared?

Patients do not usually have to stay in hospital until they are clear of TB.

You will be discharged once you are responding to treatment and able to manage at home.

How will this affect my visitors?

Visiting is allowed as usual. If any further guidance is required the Respiratory Specialist Nurses or Infection Prevention Team will be available for information/support.

What happens when I go home?

You will be discharged following consultant input and given support in the community by the Community TB team once your condition allows.

Further Information

Please speak to either:

The Infection Prevention Team Telephone: 01493 453136

Or

The Respiratory Nurse Specialist 01493 453423

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

Courtesy and respect

- A welcoming and positive attitude
 - Polite, friendly and interested in people
 - Value and respect people as individuals
- So people feel **welcome**

Attentively kind and helpful

- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
 - Attentive, responsive & take time to help
 - Visible presence of staff to provide care
- So people feel **cared for**

Responsive communication

- Listen to people & answer their questions
 - Keep people clearly informed
 - Involve people
- So people feel **in control**

Effective and professional

- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
 - Effective care / services from joined up teams
 - Organised and timely, looking to improve
- So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240