

TB DISEASE - You Need Treatment To Make You Well



What is TB? TB is short for the disease called tuberculosis. TB can attack any part of the body, but it most often attacks the lungs. You can have TB disease in your lungs or other parts of your body like the kidney, brain, or the spine.

How is TB spread? The TB germs spray into the air when someone who has TB disease in their lungs coughs, speaks, sings, laughs or sneezes. Anyone nearby can breathe the TB germs into their lungs. You cannot get TB from shaking hands, sharing glasses and dishes, or from toilet seats.

Why am I sick? You are sick with TB disease because TB germs start to grow in your body.

What are the symptoms of TB?

- Cough for more than 3 weeks
- Feel weak
- Lose weight
- Run a fever
- Cough up blood
- Sweat a lot at night
- Have chills

Is TB Serious? Yes, TB disease is very serious. You can get better with the right treatment. TB can be cured, but without proper treatment you could die.

How can I get well? When you have TB disease you need medical treatment. TB disease is treated with several medicines taken together. In most cases these drugs kill the TB germs in your body.

How long will I have to take my medicines? In order to become well, you will take your medicines for at least 6 months. Some people may need medicines for up to 2 years. It is very **important** to take all of your medicines for as long as directed by your health care provider.

What can happen if I do not take my medicines? If you do not take your medicines correctly your TB could come back. You could spread the germs again. Your medicines also may no longer kill your TB germs. This will make it very hard to cure your TB.

How can I remember to take my medicines? A health care worker will talk to you about a plan for taking your medicines. You may take your treatment by Directly Observed Therapy (DOT). With DOT, a health care worker is with you when take your medicines. DOT makes it easy to take your TB pills. If you have questions, contact your public health department or your doctor.

**Protect yourself, your family and friends from TB.
Finish your TB treatment!**

Text - Virginia Department of Health Division of TB Control

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