



TB & HIV - A Dangerous Partnership

What is TB?

“TB” is the short name for the disease called **tuberculosis**. When a person with TB disease in the lungs or throat coughs, speaks, laughs or sneezes, tiny TB germs spray into the air. Anyone nearby can breathe the TB germs into their lungs. TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. This is called **TB infection**. Your body’s immune system traps the TB germs, and keeps you healthy. Sometimes, your body cannot fight the TB germs. If these TB germs make you sick, this is

called **TB disease**. The germs most often attack the lungs. They can also attack the kidneys, the brain, the spine, or other parts of the body. If you get TB disease, you need medical treatment. You can get better with the right treatment. But, if you don’t get treatment, you can die.

Why is it important to know if I have both TB and HIV infections? HIV infection weakens your body’s immune system. If you have both TB and HIV infections, **you have a very high risk of getting sick with TB disease**.

Good News! You can prevent TB infection from becoming TB disease! The first step is to find out if you are infected with the TB germ. You can do this by getting a TB skin test.

What is a TB skin test? A TB skin test is done on the arm. In two or three days, a health care worker will look at your arm to see if there is a reaction. A “positive” reaction means you may have TB infection.

Can HIV infection affect the TB skin test results? Sometimes, if you are infected with both HIV and TB germs, you may have a “negative” reaction to the TB skin test. This is because your body’s immune system is not working properly. Your health care provider will talk with you about your risk for TB infection or TB disease. You may need other medical tests or treatment.

What should I do if I have both HIV & TB infections? Get required follow-up tests. This will include a chest x-ray and maybe some other tests. If these tests show that you have TB disease, your health care provider will give you medicines to cure your TB. If your tests show that you have TB infection, your health care provider may give you medicines to kill your **TB infection** so that it does not become **TB disease**.

What do I need to know about my medicines? Your health care provider will tell you how to take your medicines and about any side effects.

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

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