

## STOP TB Infection Before It Makes You Sick!



### What is TB?

"TB" is the short name for the disease called tuberculosis. TB can attack any part of the body, but it most often attacks the lungs.

### How do I get TB infection?

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. You cannot get TB from shaking hands, sharing glasses and dishes, or from toilet seats. TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. Your body fights the TB germs to keep you healthy. This is **TB infection**. Sometimes, your body cannot fight the TB germs. If these TB germs make you sick, this is called **TB disease**. If you get TB disease, you need medical help. You can get well with the right treatment. You can die if you don't get treatment.

### How do I know if I have TB infection?

A skin test is one way to tell if you have TB infection. This test is done on the arm. Your health care provider will explain the test to you. If a small bump appears on your arm at the test site, your test may be "positive". If a health care worker decides that your test is positive, you have TB infection. You may have a "negative" test. BUT, if you were around a person with active TB disease, you may need to have the test again.

### My skin test was positive. What do I do now?

The first step will be to have a chest x-ray to make sure you do not have TB disease. If your x-ray does not show TB disease, you may still need medicine to keep your TB germs from making you sick. Your health care provider may give you one or more medicines to treat the infection. It is very important that you take your medicines. **It takes a long time to kill the TB germs.**

**What do I need to know about my medicines?** You may have to take your medicines for 4 to 9 months. Your health care provider will tell you how to take your medicines. Ask your health care provider about side effects of your medicines. 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

[www.vdh.virginia.gov/epi/tb](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epi/tb) November 8, 2002

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