

# WHAT IS ACTIVE TUBERCULOSIS (TB)?

## PATIENT EDUCATION HANDBOOK



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## 1. What is Tuberculosis? (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) is a germ (Bacteria) that can be treated with special antibiotics. TB germs are tricky! They can hide inside your body and stay "asleep," so you don't feel sick or spread them to others. But if your body gets weaker, the germs "wake up", become active, and make you ill. Anyone can get TB.

TB primarily affects the lungs but can also spread to the entire body, including the brain, stomach, intestines, kidneys, bladder, and spine.

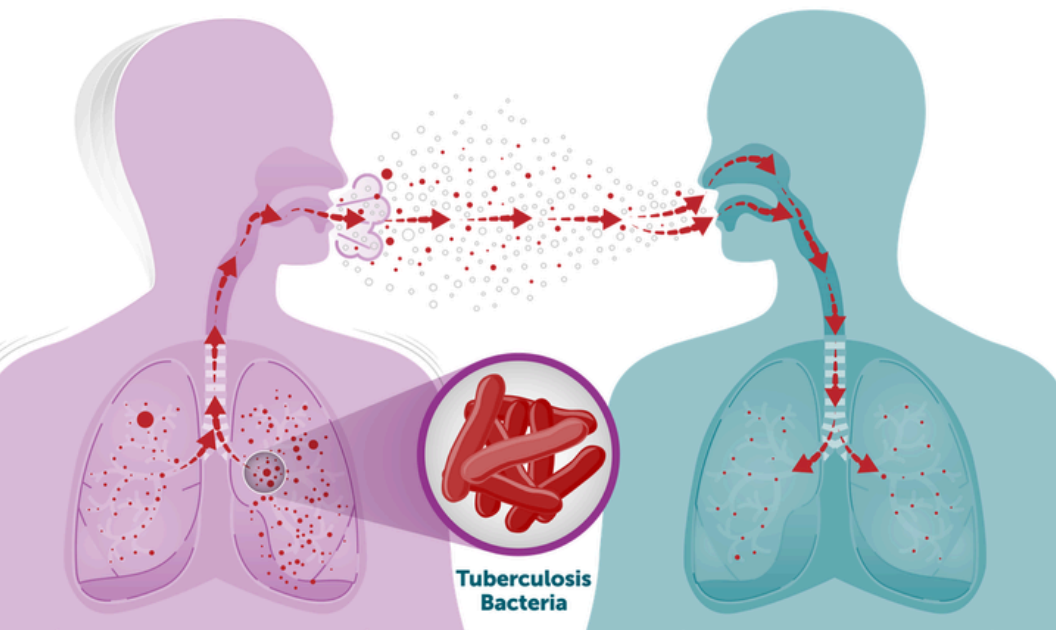
## 2. What is ACTIVE TB?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease. It's when TB germs "wake up", become active and grow in the body because the immune system can't fight them off.
- Most people who have active TB will feel sick and can spread the germs to others.
- The good news is that active TB can be treated and cured with medicines. But if someone doesn't get treatment, it can be dangerous.

**For more information:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/>

[https://www.cdc.gov/tb/media/Question\\_Answers\\_About\\_TB\\_English.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tb/media/Question_Answers_About_TB_English.pdf)



### 3. How Does TB Enter The Body?

TB germs can float in the air in a room with poor ventilation when someone who is sick with active TB coughs, sneezes, laughs, talks, or sings.

If you breathe in that air, the germs might get inside you.

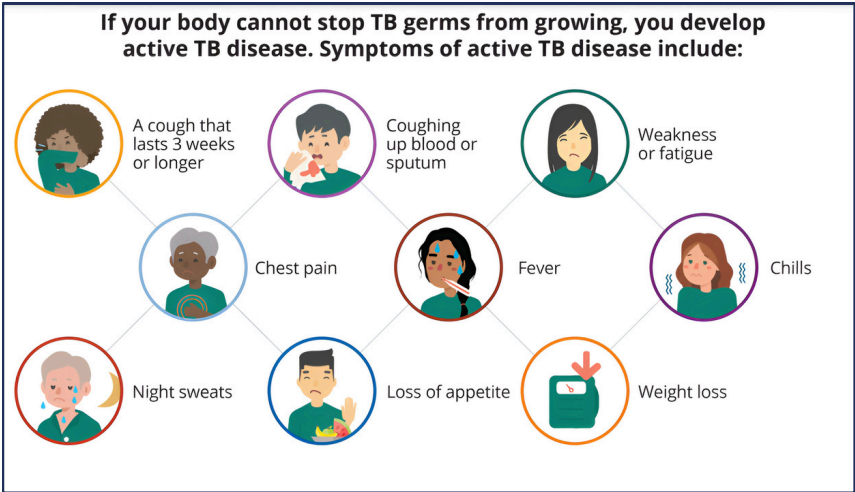
### 4. Who Has An Increased Chance of Getting Tuberculosis?

1. People with weak immune systems, like those with HIV infection, diabetes, or cancer.
2. Family members who are around someone with Active TB.
3. People living in crowded places, such as shelters or prisons.
4. Older adults whose bodies don't fight germs as well.
5. People who smoke or have lung problems like COPD.
6. People from places where TB is more common, like parts of Africa, South America, or Asia.

**For more information:**

[https://www.cdc.gov/tb/media/Question\\_Answers\\_About\\_TB\\_English.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tb/media/Question_Answers_About_TB_English.pdf)

## 5. Symptoms of ACTIVE TB



## 6. Importance of Taking Active TB Medication

Treatment for active TB disease can take four, six, or nine months, depending on the treatment plan.

The treatment plan for active TB disease uses different combinations of medicines that may include:

- Rifampin
- Isoniazid
- Ethambutol
- Vitamin B6
- Pyrazinamide
- and in rare cases other stronger medicines



**For more information:**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/treatment/active-tuberculosis-disease.html>

## 6. Importance of Taking Active TB Medication continued

Don't skip any doses, and don't stop taking your medicine early! Stopping too soon can be dangerous!

TB germs take a long time to be killed. You might start feeling better after a few weeks, but be careful! Active TB germs can still be alive in your body for days or even longer, even if you don't feel sick anymore.



You have to keep taking your medicine as ordered by your healthcare provider until *all* the TB germs are gone. Even if you feel fine, you must finish *all* your medicine to make sure the TB germs are gone for good!

## 7. Foods to Eat While on Active TB Medication:

### Protein-rich foods:

Eggs  
Beans and lentils  
Nuts and seeds  
Lean meats: turkey, fish, chicken

### High-calorie foods:

Avocados  
Cheese  
Dried fruits  
Granola bars  
Dark chocolate  
Whole milk and yogurt

### Foods rich in nutrients:

Berries  
Citrus fruits  
Dark green leafy vegetables

- Increase intake of fluids like water and coconut water



### **Foods to Avoid While on Active TB Medication:**

If you are being treated for TB, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests staying away from these foods and drinks that can slow down your healing:

- **Alcohol:** Wine or alcohol while taking TB medicine because it may hurt your liver.
- **Caffeinated Drinks:** Keep coffee and other caffeinated drinks to a minimum.
- **Processed Foods:** Processed foods and deep-fried foods.
- **Refined Products:** Sugar and flour.
- **Raw or Undercooked Foods:** Raw eggs or foods that contain raw eggs, raw or undercooked chicken, meat, and seafood, as well as unpasteurized milk.

## 8. Possible Side Effects of TB Medicine.

Patients being treated for TB should be aware of possible side effects from their medications.

If you think you're having a side effect, please contact your doctor or nurse right away. They may ask you to stop taking the medicine or return to the clinic for testing.

Some side effects are mild, such as a skin rash, upset stomach, or nausea.

A harmless side effect of the medication rifampin is that it can turn your tears, sweat, and urine an orange-red color. This effect is normal and will fade after you stop treatment. However, it can permanently stain soft contact lenses, so your healthcare provider may advise you to avoid wearing them during treatment.

### **If you have any of these color changes you can continue taking your medicine.**

Other side effects are more serious. Serious side effects include:

- Liver injury
- Abdominal pain
- Loss of appetite
- Flu-like symptoms
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Tingling or numbness in your hands or feet
- Skin and eyes turning yellow (also called jaundice)

**For more information:**


<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/webcourses/TB101/page16443.html>


## 9. Active TB and Isolation

### Why is isolation important?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says people with active TB disease should stay away from others for a while, so they don't spread the germ. TB can spread through the air when a person with TB coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings.

### Dos and don'ts of isolation:

- 
- Make sure your room has good airflow. Open a window to let fresh air in. This helps keep the air clean and you feeling good!
  - Follow Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette:
    - Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, typically with a tissue, and wash your hands afterwards
  - Wear a mask when around others.

- 
- Have new visitors to your home
  - Overdoing physical activity, such as overworking, fatigue, stress, smoking, and late nights
  - Go into crowded places or be around people who get sick easily—like kids or those whose bodies aren't strong at fighting germs.

### How long does isolation last for a person with Active TB disease?

People with active TB disease should stay away from others for the first 2 to 4 weeks of treatment. They can be around others again after they feel better and have three negative sputum or phlegm test results for TB. Your healthcare provider or nurse will tell you when your isolation period has ended.

#### For more information:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/tb/cdctbfacts/tbprevention.htm>



## 10. Common Questions at the Start of TB Treatment

When you start treatment for active TB, you might have many questions.

**Here are some common questions people ask:**

### 1. What kind of medicine will I take?

- Your nurse or healthcare provider will choose the best medicines for you based on the type of TB you have and your health history. TB medicine helps kill the germs and stops them from spreading in your body.

### 2. Do these medications have side effects?

- Everyone's body is different. Some people have side effects, and some don't. Your nurse or healthcare provider will talk to you about the side effects that each medicine might have.

### 3. Can I spread TB to others while taking the medicine?

- Yes, when you first start treatment, you can spread the TB germ to other people. But after a few weeks of taking your medicine, you won't be as likely to spread it. You should stay away from others until your nurse or healthcare provider says it's safe.

### 4. What if I forget to take my medicine?

- It's important to take your medicine at the same time every day. If you forget, tell your healthcare provider. Missing doses can make the medicine less effective and might make you take it for a longer time.

### 5. Do I need to change anything about my daily life?

- You might need to rest more during the first 2 weeks of treatment. You should eat healthy foods and avoid alcohol.

### 6. How will I know the medicine is working?

- Your healthcare provider will check on you using tests like X-rays and lab work. You may start to feel better after a few weeks, but you still need to take *all* your medicine to make sure the TB germs are gone, and you don't get sick again.

**For more information:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/communication-resources/tb-questions-and-answers-booklet.html>

## **7. Can I travel while on TB medicines?**

- If you are planning to travel, tell your doctor. They will help you know if it's safe for you to go.

## **8. What if I feel better before I finish my medicines?**

- Even if you feel better, you need to take *all* your medicines to make sure the TB germ is gone. If you stop too soon, you could get sick again and spread the germ to others.

## **9. What if the medicines don't work?**

- When you take your medicines the right way, they usually work well. But sometimes, people need different medication. Your doctor will work to make sure the treatment is working for you.

## **10. What should I do at home?**

- Try to open windows for fresh air and wear a mask when you are around people.

## **11. What if I'm around other people during treatment?**

- Be careful around people like babies, older people, or anyone who is sick. They can get TB more easily.

## **12. Can TB come back after treatment?**

- If you don't finish your treatment, the TB germ could come back. That's why it's important to take *all* your medicines until your doctor says you're done.

## **13. Can I still live a normal life while taking the medicine?**

- Once you can no longer spread the TB germ to others, you can resume most of your everyday activities, like going to school, working, and hanging out with family and friends while continuing to take your medicines.

### **For more information:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/communication-resources/tb-questions-and-answers>

## 11. How Long Will I have to Take TB Medicines?

- You'll need to take medicine for 6 to 9 months. It's important to take all of the medication, even if you start feeling better. That way, the germs causing the sickness will be gone for good.
- Take all of your TB medicines exactly the way your doctor or nurse tells you to.
- Don't miss any doses or stop taking your medicine early. It can be dangerous if you don't take your medicine on time.
- Tell your nurse or healthcare provider if you are having trouble taking your medicine.

## 12. Taking care of you: Exercises, Breathing, and Self-Care

Here's a more detailed breakdown of self-care tips while on Active TB medication:

### **Schedule of Medications**

Follow your nurse and healthcare provider's instructions. Take your medicines just as they tell you, including how much to take and when to take them.

### **Take with food:**

If your stomach feels upset, talk to your doctor. They might tell you to take your medication with food.

### **Set reminders:**

Use alarms, pillboxes, or notes to help you remember to take your medication regularly.

### **Keep a list of medications:**

Know what medications you are taking and why.

### **Side effects:**

Please let your nurse or healthcare provider know if you feel any side effects or have questions about your treatment.

### **Wash your hands:**

Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after you cough, sneeze, or use the bathroom.

**Avoid public transportation if instructed by your nurse or doctor.**

**Get enough rest:**

Getting enough sleep helps your body heal and stay strong.

**Manage stress:**

Practice relaxing activities like deep breathing, meditation, or yoga.

**Engage in light exercise:**

Once symptoms of active TB have gone away, engage in regular, mild to moderate exercise to improve overall health and well-being.



**Seek support:**

Talk to your family, friends, or a support group if you feel sad or need help while you recover.

**Keep appointments:**

Make sure to go to all your doctor visits so they can see how you're doing and help you feel your best.

**Avoid close contact:**

If you're feeling sick, stay home and give others space. This helps keep everyone safe, especially those who are more susceptible to illness. Please wait until your doctor says it's okay to be around others again.



**For more information:**

<https://www.webmd.com/lung/tuberculosis-prevention>

### 13. I completed Active TB treatment, Now What?

- Ask your nurse or healthcare provider for papers that show you finished your treatment for active TB. Give one copy to your primary care doctor and keep one for yourself.
- Your healthcare provider might ask you to get another X-ray later to make sure the TB germs are gone.
- Once TB germs get into your body, your TB blood tests will always be positive, even though you have been cured of TB.
- Most healthy people won't need treatment for active TB again.
- The treatment you finished only kills the TB germs you had at that time. If you're around someone with active TB again, you could get new TB germs and get sick again.



**For more information:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/treatment/index.html>

## 14. What is a TB Contact Investigation?

**TB Contact Investigation is a process to:**

1. Find out who spent time around a person with active TB disease.
  - a. This person is called a **CONTACT**.
  - b. The person with Active TB Disease is called the **CASE**.
2. Check if people exposed to TB have active TB disease.
3. Provide the proper treatment for contacts with active TB disease.

### Who are TB Contacts?

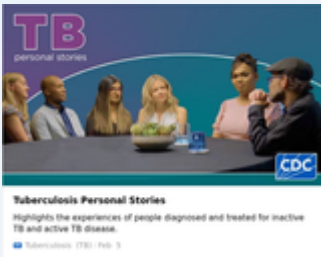
Contacts are persons who have shared airspace with a person with active TB germ.

### Why is it Important to Find and Check TB Contacts?

- We need to identify and evaluate people who have been in close contact with someone who has TB to help protect their health.
- About 1 in 100 contacts already have active TB and need treatment.

## 15. Patients' Personal Stories

Tuberculosis is still a significant health problem in the U.S. It can happen to anyone, no matter where they come from. These stories tell what it's like to have active TB, and how health workers are trying to stop it.



<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/stories/index.html>



Scan here for Tuberculosis  
Personal Stories

### For more information:

[https://www.cdc.gov/tb/media/pdfs/Self\\_Study\\_Module\\_8\\_Contact\\_Investigations\\_for\\_Tuberculosis.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tb/media/pdfs/Self_Study_Module_8_Contact_Investigations_for_Tuberculosis.pdf)

## 16. We are TB: Tuberculosis Survivors & Advocates

We Are TB is a national support and advocacy network led by people who have personally experienced tuberculosis. Their mission is to empower, educate, and connect individuals affected by TB while partnering with clinics and healthcare providers to improve care, support, and outcomes for all. They help patients and doctors by sharing patients’ stories to help others understand TB and feel less alone.



<https://www.wearetb.com>



Scan here for We are TB



### NTCA Mission

“To protect the public’s health by advancing the elimination of tuberculosis in the U.S. through the concerted action of state, local, and territorial programs”.



Scan here for NTCA

**For more information:**

<https://tbcontrollers.org/community/tb-survivors-we-are-tb/>

## Frequently asked questions:

### 1. Is there a vaccine against Active Tuberculosis?

- Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) is a vaccine for active Tuberculosis (TB) disease that is often given to many people outside of the United States.
- This vaccine is not generally used in the United States because of:
  - The low risk of infection with TB bacteria in the United States
  - The vaccine has variable effectiveness against adult lung TB
  - The vaccine's potential to cause a false-positive TB skin test reaction
- Tell your nurse or health care provider if you have received the TB vaccine.

### 2. Does the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine fully protect me Active Tuberculosis?

- The BCG TB vaccine does not protect people from getting active TB disease in the lungs, which is the most common form of the disease in the United States.

*The BCG vaccine is a shot that helps protect people from TB, but this shot doesn't always work the same for everyone. Sometimes it works really well, and other times it doesn't help much at all. That means even if someone gets the BCG vaccine, they can still get sick with TB later on.*



<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/vaccines/index.html>

### 3. What is Directly Observed Therapy (DOT)?

When someone has active TB, they may get Directly Observed Therapy (DOT). That means a healthcare worker watches them take their medicine to make sure it's taken correctly.

### 4. What is Self-Administered Therapy (SAT)?

In active Tuberculosis treatment, Self-Administered Therapy (SAT) allows you to take your medication on your own.




# Public Health Tuberculosis Clinic Information

Your Public Health Nurse is: \_\_\_\_\_

Your TB Clinic is: \_\_\_\_\_

TB Clinic Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



**DPH Public Health Centers**  
**Nurse Only Clinic Registration Schedule**



All schedules are subject to change and clinics are closed during [COVID-19](#). The following schedule reflects Registration Hours and Clinics open 30 minutes after Registration Hours. Please call ahead to confirm and have an appointment. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment.

**Special note: All appointments are available on the same day.** Walk-in patients should arrive as early as possible to register the day of their visit.

**Nurse Only Clinic services:**

- All children immunizations and TB testing
- All adult immunizations for those unvaccinated and underimmunized
- TB testing for those in congregate living, school volunteers as well as unvaccinated and underimmunized
- COVID-19 education and testing for all groups
- Phlebotomy
- Vaccinations

There is a \$15 vaccine administration fee per patient for each visit to our Nurse Only Clinic and \$30.00 for families of two or more. This fee covers all services for that visit. If the child has Medi-Cal or Medi-Cal plus, the visit is free if the patient can provide the Medi-Cal coverage card at the time of registration.

San Gabriel Valley Health Center	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AM	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00
PM	No Clinic	No Clinic	No Clinic	No Clinic	No Clinic

**Address:** 12500 N. Hollywood Blvd. (Between Chatsworth & Van Nuys)  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90015  
(Between Chatsworth & Van Nuys) (Between Chatsworth & Van Nuys)

San Gabriel Valley Health Center	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
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**Address:** 12500 N. Hollywood Blvd. (Between Chatsworth & Van Nuys)  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90015  
(Between Chatsworth & Van Nuys) (Between Chatsworth & Van Nuys)

*This clinic is only open on the first Friday of each month.*

San Gabriel Valley Health Center	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AM	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00	8:00-11:00
PM	No Clinic	No Clinic	No Clinic	No Clinic	No Clinic

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## TB Nurse Clinic Schedule.pdf

Click the link for the most recent and up-to-date TB Nurse Clinic Schedule.pdf:

<http://ph.lacounty.gov/tb/docs/nurseclinic.pdf>

OR



Scan this QR code for the most recent and up-to-date TB Nurse Clinic Schedule.pdf







For more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/about/active-tuberculosis-disease.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/communication-resources/tb-questions-and-answers-booklet.html>