

# Tuberculosis (TB) Facts

## TB and HIV/AIDS

### What is TB?

"TB" is short for a disease called tuberculosis. TB is spread through the air from one person to another. TB germs are passed through the air when someone who is sick with **TB disease** of the lungs or throat coughs, speaks, laughs, sings, or sneezes. Anyone near the sick person with **TB disease** can breathe TB germs into their lungs.

TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. This is called **latent TB infection**. This means you have only inactive (sleeping) TB germs in your body. The inactive germs cannot be passed on to anyone else. However, if these germs wake up or become active in your body and multiply, you will get sick with **TB disease**.

When TB germs are active (multiplying in your body), this is called **TB disease**. These germs usually attack the lungs. They can also attack other parts of the body, such as, the kidneys, brain, or spine. **TB disease** will make you sick. People with **TB disease** may spread the germs to people they spend time with every day.

### How does human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection affect TB?

The HIV, or the AIDS virus, helps TB germs make you sick because it weakens your immune system. If you are infected with HIV and with TB germs, you have a very big chance of getting **TB disease**. The TB germs are much more likely to become active and attack your lungs and other parts of the body.

If you think you may have **HIV infection**, talk to your doctor about getting an HIV test. If you have **HIV infection** and **TB infection**, you must get treatment right away to keep from getting sicker. Take your medicine exactly the way your doctor or health care worker tells you. TB drugs are very strong. They can treat **TB infection** and **TB disease**, even in people with **HIV infection**.



**Remember, TB drugs only work when you take them the way your health care worker tells you!**

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

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention  
Division of Tuberculosis Elimination

