

Take Steps to Control **TB** TUBERCULOSIS

When You Have **HIV**



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for HIV/AIDS,
Viral Hepatitis, STD, and
TB Prevention



What's Inside:

People with HIV are also at risk for getting TB. Read this brochure today to learn about TB and HIV.

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Taking medicine can save your life

Take steps to control TB.

“I got a skin test for TB at the clinic. My TB skin test was positive. Other tests showed that I had TB disease. I started on the TB pills as the doctor suggested. Because I have HIV, I was pretty upset when I found out I had TB too. I just didn’t want to take any more pills. But—I also wanted to be healthy, so I took the pills. It was not easy, but I managed to get through. After months of treatment, the TB germs were gone.”



“When you have HIV infection your system is weak, so, you catch things pretty easily. It is hard enough dealing with HIV. When the doctor at the clinic told me I had TB disease I said, just tell me what I need to do and I’ll do it.”

TB is spread through the air.

TB stands for tuberculosis, a disease caused by tiny germs that are put into the air when a person with untreated TB disease coughs, laughs, sneezes, or sings. Anyone nearby can breathe in these TB germs and get TB infection. TB usually affects the lungs, but it sometimes affects other parts of the body. If left untreated, TB infection can turn into TB disease and make you very sick.



If you have TB infection and HIV infection:

- You have only dormant (sleeping) TB germs in your body.
- As long as the TB germs are dormant (sleeping), they will not make you sick and you cannot pass these germs to anyone else.
- HIV infection weakens your body's defenses. Without treatment for TB infection, you are very likely to develop TB disease.

If you have TB disease, it means you:

- Have active TB germs in your body.
- Are sick and you may have symptoms, such as a cough (sometimes with blood or chest pain), fever, weight loss, tiredness, and night sweats.
- May be able to pass TB germs on to your family, friends, and others.
- Must get treatment right away to keep from getting sicker and continuing to pass TB germs to others.



A chest x-ray may show if you have TB disease.

Get your questions answered.

Is TB really as serious as people say?

Yes it is, especially for people with HIV infection. TB infection and HIV infection can work together to make you very sick. When your immune system is weak, untreated TB infection can quickly turn into TB disease. Without treatment, TB disease can cause you to get very sick or even die. The good news is that TB is easily prevented, treated, and cured.

Do all people with HIV get TB disease?

No, but it does mean you have a greater chance of getting TB disease if you have both TB infection and HIV infection. For this reason, if you have HIV infection your doctor may also want to give you a TB skin test or TB blood test.

My TB skin test was negative. Now my doctor says I have to have more tests. Why?

When a person has HIV infection, the TB skin test may not react the way it should. Or it may be too soon for your body to react to the test. For these reasons, your doctor may want to give you a second skin test, or a TB blood test.





The TB skin test or TB blood test will show if you have ever had any TB germs in your body. You may need other tests as well.

Take these steps:

1. **Get a TB skin test or a TB blood test** at your local health department. Or, ask your doctor or healthcare provider for the tests. These tests are not vaccines. These tests let your doctor know if you have ever had TB germs in your body.
2. **Get your results.** If you had a TB skin test, return to the office or clinic in 2 to 3 days (48 hours to 72 hours) so your healthcare provider can read your TB skin test. If you had a TB blood test, ask your provider when you should return to get your results.
3. If you have TB infection or TB disease, you will need to **take TB medicine** as your healthcare provider says.

Taking TB medicine can save your life.

Unless treated, dormant (sleeping) TB germs can wake-up and make you sick with TB disease.

- This happens more easily if you have HIV infection, even if you feel strong and healthy. The TB medicine is the only way to kill the TB germs in your body.
- You need to take the pills the right way, as your doctor or healthcare provider tells you. If not, the treatment may be longer, more difficult, or not work at all.

Staying on a medicine plan can be hard. You may already be taking medicines for HIV infection, and now you may need to take more pills. Talk with your doctor to make a plan that works for you. Ask your friends and family for support.







Follow these tips:

- Get tested for TB.
- Write the date of your last TB skin test or TB blood test here:
_____ .
- If you need treatment, take all of the pills each day as directed by your doctor.
- Ask a family member and friend to remind you that it is important to take all of your medicines as directed. Write the name of the person you will ask to help you stay on your medicine plan here:
_____ .
- If you think your TB medicine is making you sick, talk to your doctor before stopping any medicines.

Remember: When you treat TB, you are taking steps to protect your health and the health of others.

Notes

**For more information on TB, call your
local health department at**

**or visit the CDC Division of
Tuberculosis Elimination website at
<http://www.cdc.gov/tb>**

**To find out where you can get an HIV test or
for more information on HIV or AIDS call**

**CDC-INFO
at**

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

1-800-232-6348 TTY

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