



Tuberculosis: Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by bacteria that is spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine.

What Are the Symptoms of TB?

The general symptoms of TB disease include cough, chest pain, coughing up of blood, feelings of sickness or weakness, unexplained weight loss, fever, and night sweats.

How is TB Transmitted?

TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings.

Is everyone who has TB Infectious?

Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. As a result, two TB-related conditions exist: Latent TB infection and Active TB disease.

People with *latent TB infection* have TB germs in their bodies, but they are not sick because the germs are not active. These people do not have symptoms of TB disease, and they cannot spread the germs to others.

People with TB disease are sick from TB germs that are active, meaning that usually have symptoms of TB disease. People with TB disease of the lungs or throat are capable of spreading germs to others.

What is the risk to my child?

TB is a very hard disease to catch. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics state that children younger than 10 years of age with pulmonary tuberculosis are rarely contagious. Young children usually do not transmit TB to others and their contacts are unlikely to be infected because of exposure to them

How is TB Disease Treated?

TB disease can be treated by taking antibiotics for 6 to 12 months. It is very important that people who have TB disease finish the medicine, and take the drugs exactly as prescribed. If they stop taking the drugs too soon, they can become sick again; if they do not take the drugs correctly, the germs that are still alive may become resistant to those drugs.