

Is TB medicine safe?

☑ Yes. When TB medicine is taken as it is ordered it is usually safe. The medicine works by killing the TB germs before they start to grow and make you sick.

☑ It is important to not drink alcohol (e.g. wine, beer, liquor) when you are taking this medicine.

☑ Some people may have side effects from the medicine. Call your health care provider if you have:

- Upset stomach or vomiting
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Fever
- Dark coloured pee (urine)
- Loss of appetite
- Skin rash or itchy skin
- Pain or tingling in your fingers or toes
- A feeling of being really tired or weak

☑ You may have regular blood tests to check for any side effects.



Questions? Call and ask to speak to a TB nurse

Toll Free: 1-800-922-0096

St. Thomas Site: 519-631-9900

Woodstock Site: 519-421-9901



Latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI)

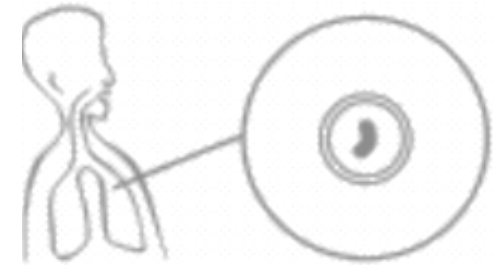
What is tuberculosis (TB)?

TB is a disease caused by a germ called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It is spread from person to person through the air. TB germs usually affect the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body such as kidneys and spine.

Not everyone who breathes in the TB germs becomes sick. As a result, there are two forms of TB: **latent TB** and **active TB**.

What is latent TB?

People with **latent TB** have TB germs in their body, but they are not sick because the germs are not growing. These people do not have symptoms of TB and they cannot spread the germs to others. They may become sick with TB in the future.



If you've had a positive TB skin test you should talk to your health care provider. A positive TB skin test is one sign that you might have latent TB.

Latent tuberculosis infection

What is active TB?

People with **active TB** are sick from the TB germs that are growing in their body. They usually have symptoms such as coughing, chest pain, fever, night sweats and weight loss. People with active TB disease of the lungs or throat can spread the germs to others.



What is the difference between active and latent TB?

Latent TB	Active TB
The TB germs aren't growing.	TB germs are active and growing. The germs are causing damage to your body.
You don't look or feel sick. Your chest x-ray is usually normal.	You feel sick (e.g. cough, chest pain, weight loss). Your health care provider will order special tests.
You can't spread the germs to others.	If the TB germs are in your lungs you can spread them to other people when you cough, sneeze.
You can be treated by taking one medication.	You can be treated with many medications over a long period of time.

Did you know? TB does not spread easily. It takes close, long and regular contact with someone who is sick with TB to become infected with the TB germs.

Latent tuberculosis infection

What should I do if I've had a positive TB skin test?

A positive TB skin test is a sign that you might have breathed in the TB germs and have **latent TB**. It does not tell us if you have active TB.

If you've had a positive TB skin test you should:

- Call your health care provider to book an appointment.
- Keep a record of your TB skin test result. Never repeat the test because it will always be positive.

Your health care provider will:

- Order more tests to make sure you don't have active TB (e.g. a chest x-ray).
- Talk to you about taking medicine.

Why is latent TB treated?

If you have **latent TB** your health care provider may want you to take medicine to get rid of the TB germs before they become active and make you sick.

This decision will be based on your chances of getting sick with TB. Some people are more likely than others to become sick. This includes people who have just breathed in the TB germ and people with certain health problems.

How is latent TB treated?

Latent TB is usually treated with a medicine called isoniazid (INH). Most people take this medicine every day for 9 months.

It's very important to take the medicine just as your health care provider says and for as long as they say.

NOTE: TB medicine is **free** in Ontario.