



Tuberculosis and HIV

What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is spread by tiny germs that can float in the air. The TB germs may spray into the air if a person with **TB disease** coughs, shouts, or sneezes. Anyone nearby can breathe TB germs into their lungs.

TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. This is called **TB infection**. A strong immune system fights TB germs and keeps them from making you sick.

But sometimes, the TB germs can break away and spread. Then they cause **TB disease**. The germs can attack the lungs or other parts of the body. They can go to the kidneys, the brain, or the spine. If a person has TB disease, they need medical help. Without the right medical help, they can die.

How does HIV infection affect TB?

HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus — the AIDS virus) weakens your immune system, making it easier for TB germs to spread. If you are infected with both HIV and TB, your chance of getting full TB disease is very high. TB is more likely to attack your lungs and other parts of your body.

If you think you might have HIV infection, talk to your doctor about getting an HIV test. If you have HIV infection and TB infection, the sooner you start taking anti-TB medicine, the better your chances are to stay healthy for many years.

If you have HIV infection, it is very important to get tested for TB infection at least once a year. Anti-TB drugs are strong. They can prevent or cure TB disease even in people with HIV infection. Remember, anti-TB drugs only work when you take them!

