

## Health Check-ups for Family and Colleagues

### **I have TB disease but my family and colleagues seem to be fine. Why do they need check-ups?**

TB is an infectious disease caused by TB bacteria. However, most active TB patients only show mild symptoms and can be spreading the bacteria to others without noticing that they are infected.

TB bacteria are most infectious to people who you spend a long time with on a daily basis such as your family, friends and colleagues. When a TB patient is identified, it is necessary to check whether the patient has passed it to others or whether anyone has become infected. If another person is identified as having TB through this process, he/she can receive early treatment to minimize disorders and shorten the treatment period as well as preventing further infections.

### **Who needs check-ups?**

As the TB bacteria are most infectious to people such as family members, friends and colleagues who have spent a long time with the patient on a daily basis, these people should be the subject for a check-up. The head of the Health Center as a doctor decides who will actually be called for a check-up. He/She considers the patients' condition or how often they spent a time with others, and chooses the persons with high risks of infection. Family members are usually chosen.

### **When and how many times should check-ups be taken?**

The timing and the number of check-ups depend on the condition of the bacterial spread, that is infectiousness of the patient.

They will receive a notice from their registered Health Center when the check-up period approaches. The check-up at the Health Center is free of charge.

*If TB bacteria are found from the TB patient's phlegm;*

Family members and colleagues who are thought to be at high risk of infection because of their age, condition and how they got contact with the patients may be required check-ups for 2 years.

This is because the disease most likely develops in six to eighteen months after infection. To enable early detection of the disease, they are required to go for periodic check-ups.

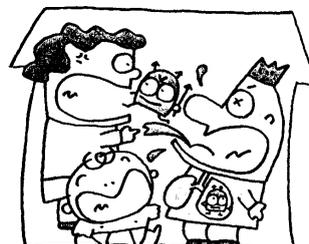
*If the patient has extrapulmonary tuberculosis or TB bacteria are not found from the patient's phlegm;*

The check-up is given within two months of the patient ' s starting his/her treatment.

In this case, as the risk of infection to family members and colleagues is low, further check-ups are not required if abnormality is not found in this check-up.

It is recommended, like any other person, that they receive general physical examination annually after their check-up programs have finished. These check-ups can be received at the workplace, city/town office or Health Center.

Also if coughing or sputum continues for more than two weeks, they must make sure to take chest X-ray or sputum test.



### **What is the content of the check-up?**

The content varies depending on the age of the person.

*18 years old and above;*

Chest X-ray: to check for abnormalities such as focuses in the lungs

Sputum test only when symptoms exist: to check whether TB bacteria exist in the sputum

For 29 years old and below with risk of TB infection, tuberculin test may also be taken.

*Below 18 years old (High school students and below);*

Tuberculin test: to check for TB infection. However, this test alone does not identify whether it develops into a TB disease. It is especially difficult if the person received a BCG vaccination. In such cases, the records of previous BCG (vaccination) and TB reaction tests are required.

Chest X-ray: to check for abnormalities such as focuses in the lungs

Sputum test only when symptoms exist: to check whether TB bacteria exist in the sputum

### **What happens next?**

Those who have been identified as having TB disease will consult a medical center and receive treatment as the TB patient.

Those who do not have the disease but are most likely to be infected may receive preventative treatments like taking preventative medicine.