

Treatment to Prevent TB Disease

If I have TB infection, how can I prevent development of TB disease?

If you are infected with TB, you may be given medicine to prevent development of active TB disease. This is called preventive therapy. Preventive therapy is usually for those who are thought to be infected such as those with a positive skin test or who have been living or working close to someone with active TB disease. Although they do not have the disease now, they are in danger of getting TB disease later on. If you have preventive therapy under the doctor's directions, you are unlikely to develop the disease.

Regardless of whether you have received preventive therapy, you must be aware of the symptoms of TB disease, if you are infected with TB. If you ever have any of the symptoms, you should see a doctor right away.

What does "to be infected" mean?

"TB infected, means you have inactive TB bacteria in your body.

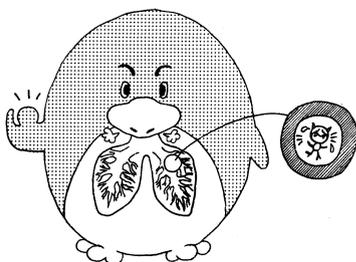
Being infected DOES NOT mean you have TB disease.

I feel fine. Why should I take medicine?

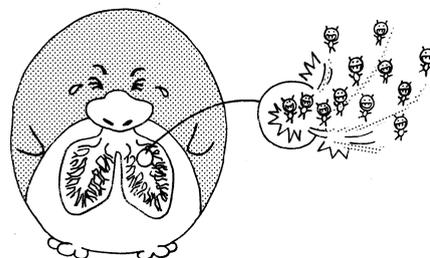
You feel fine now because TB bacteria are inactive. Your body's defenses have built a wall around the bacteria. As long as they are inactive, they are unharmed to you and cannot be infectious to others.

Although the bacteria are inactive, they are still alive. Later (often many years later), they may become active when the body's immune system will become weak. The bacteria break up the walls, multiply and damage the lungs or other body organs. This is TB disease and active TB bacteria cause this disease.

By taking medicine now, you can eradicate the bacteria before they become active and attack you and others around you. Children and HIV infected persons especially need medication because their bodies' defenses are not strong enough to fight against the bacteria without any help.



Inactive TB bacteria are not particularly harmful.



If TB bacteria become active and multiply, they will make you ill.

What medicine do I take to prevent TB?

What you should take to prevent TB is the medicine called Isoniazid (INH).

INH can be taken by almost anyone.

However, doctors may not prescribe this to those over the age of 30 or with certain medical conditions after weighing its side effects and benefits.

Make sure you inform those concerned of all of your medical history and any medicine you have taken.

How long do I have to take INH?

In order to prevent development of TB disease, you will be required to take INH every day for 6 months.

People with HIV infection will have to take INH for a longer period of time.

It may be hard to take medicine for such a long time when you do not feel ill. However, what important is to keep taking the medicine. If you stop taking too early, some of the bacteria may survive and you could be at risk of developing TB. You can continue your regular activities such as working and going to school while taking INH.

Preventive therapy can prevent 50 to 70 % of TB and will be effective for more than 10 years.

Is INH safe?

INH is very safe, but like any medicine, it can cause side effects. Tell your doctor or nurse right away if you see any changes in your health or appearance while taking INH.

What are the changes (side effects) I should watch out for?

- rash (often with an itch)
- numbness in extremities
- darker urine
- vomiting
- loss of appetite
- nausea
- changes in eyesight
- unexplained fever
- unexplained fatigue
- stomach cramp

What else can I do to prevent TB?

The best way to prevent TB is to take medicine as directed by your doctor.

You may find it easier to remember to take your medicine if you take them at the same time everyday.

In Japan, it is common to take medicine straight after breakfast. Also, it is effective to take them at the particular times like “ before meals ” or “ at bedtime ” .

Other suggestions:

- eat a healthy diet and get plenty of rest.
- avoid alcoholic beverages.
- inform your doctor or nurse of any medicine you are taking before starting any new ones.

What happens if I forget to take my medicine?

If you forget to take your daily dose once, do not worry. Just continue taking your next dose the next day as scheduled.

If you forget too many times, the medicine may not work anymore. It is especially important that people who have HIV infection DO NOT MISS taking their medicine.

Always inform those concerned with your health, if you forget to take your medicine.

Why do I need regular check-ups?

You will be given regular appointments to see the doctor while you are taking INH.

These visits are not just for picking up your medicine.

Those concerned with your health want to see you to:

- ensure the medicine is working and check whether the disease has developed
- check on your health conditions and keep you informed
- ensure you are not having any side effects from the medicine
- give you your medicine