SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Coughing for 2+ weeks or coughing up blood
- Chest pain
- Weight loss/loss of appetite
- Night sweats/fever
- Feeling tired/weak

If you have any of these symptoms you should ask your health care provider about Tuberculosis.

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388).

Tuberculosis in American Indian Populations

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## What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

**TB** is a tiny germ which you breathe into your lungs.

There are 2 stages of TB:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TB Infection</th>
<th>TB Disease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germs are &quot;sleeping&quot; but still alive</td>
<td>Germs are awake and multiplying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germs are surrounded by body's defense system</td>
<td>Germs are causing damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You do not feel sick</td>
<td>You may feel sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are not contagious</td>
<td>You may be contagious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TB disease and infections come from breathing TB germs that get into the air when someone:
- Coughs
- Sings
- Shouts
- Sneezes

You cannot get TB from:
- Clothes
- Drinking glasses
- Handshakes
- Toilets

The TB germs can “wake up” at any time and make you sick. The longer you have an untreated TB infection, the greater the chance you have of developing TB disease. Usually you get TB disease when your body is weak from:
- Diabetes
- Stress
- Substance abuse
- HIV infection
- Poor nutrition
- Some medications

## Tests Used to Detect TB

- **QuantiFERON® (Blood Test)** and/or **Tuberculin Skin Test**: For both, positive means you have the TB germ in your body and additional tests can determine the stage of disease.
- **Chest X-ray**: May show scars or disease.
- **Sputum (“phlegm” not “spit”)**: Is sent to the lab to test for TB.

## TB can be Cured with Meds!

- If you have TB infection you may be recommended to take pills for an average of 9 months to prevent getting TB disease. This decreases your chance of getting TB disease.
- If you take your TB pills every day (even when you feel better) you will reduce the risk of TB disease.
- Unlike the 1950's, today you are usually treated at home with meds.

## Tuberculosis Disease

Tuberculosis is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bacteria are spread from person to person through the air when an infected person coughs, sings, shouts, or sneezes. The bacteria can infect the lungs and other parts of the body. Symptoms of TB may include:

- Fever
- Night sweats
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Blood-streaked sputum

TB can be cured with proper treatment. The treatment usually consists of a combination of antibiotics taken for 6 to 12 months. It is important to complete the full course of treatment to prevent the disease from spreading and to prevent the development of antibiotic-resistant TB.