



# HEALTH ADVISORY

## Tuberculosis and Food Establishments

Since 1984, the number of tuberculosis (TB) cases in the United States began to increase. This increase has continued and is of concern to public health officials. It is important that food establishment operators and owners understand the manner in which TB is spread among workers and the disease's symptoms.

### **What is TB and how is it spread?**

Tuberculosis, or TB, is a disease caused by a bacteria that can attack any part of your body, but usually attacks the lungs. TB disease was once the leading cause of death in the United States. TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The bacteria are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs or sneezes. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected. People with TB disease are most likely to spread it to people they spend time with everyday. This includes family members, friends, and coworkers.

In food establishments it is spread among food handlers when a TB infected food worker coughs or sneezes, releasing the TB bacteria into the air. Nearby food workers breathe in these bacteria and become infected. TB cannot be spread by food in a food establishment. *The TB bacteria dies, when it comes in contact with food.*

### **What is TB infection?**

In most people who breathe in TB bacteria and become infected, the body is able to stop the bacteria from growing. The bacteria become inactive, but remain alive in the body and can become active later. This is called TB infection. People with TB infection have no symptoms, don't feel sick, can't spread TB to others, but can develop TB disease later in life without receiving preventive therapy. When TB bacteria become active and the disease develops in the body the following symptoms may be present: a bad cough that last longer than 2 weeks; pain in the chest; coughing up blood or sputum; weakness or fatigue; weight loss; no appetite; chills and fever; and/or sweating at night. Should you or your coworker show any of the symptoms of TB disease, they should be tested as soon as possible and be treated if the test results are positive.

### **Where do I or my employees go for testing and treatment?**

The Department of Health Services, Public Health Program and Services, offers TB testing and treatment to all persons residing in Los Angeles County at a low cost or for free. Contact the nearest Public Health Center listed on the back of this advisory for information about the day and times the TB clinics are open for testing and treatment. For additional information regarding tuberculosis, call TB control at (213) 744-6160.



# Controlling Tuberculosis in Food Service

**Department of Health Services**

Health Protection & Disease Control

and

**Environmental Health**

Certified Food Handlers Program

## *Introduction*

- Tuberculosis, or TB, is a disease caused by a bacteria which can attack any part of your body, but usually targets the lungs.
- TB was once the leading cause of death in the United States and began to disappear; however, TB has come back. More than 23,000 cases were reported in 1993.

## *What is Tuberculosis (TB)?*

- TB bacteria can destroy the lungs.
- Death results when the TB bacteria causes sufficient damage to the lungs to destroy them.

## *How is TB Spread?*

- TB is spread through the air from a person with an active infection to another.
- The TB bacteria are put in the air when a person with active case of TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs or sneezes. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.
- People with an active case of TB disease are most likely to spread it to people they spend the most time with every day. This includes family members, friends, and coworkers.
- **TB IS NOT SPREAD BY FOOD.**
- **TB IS NOT SPREAD BY PERSONS WITH AN INACTIVE TB INFECTION.**

## *What is TB Infection?*

- Generally, the airborne TB bacteria is breathed into the lungs. People then become infected. However, the body is able to fight the bacteria to stop them from growing. **The bacteria become inactive**, but remain alive in the body and can become active later. **This is called TB infection.**
- People with an inactive TB infection:
  - have no symptoms
  - do not feel sick
  - can not spread TB to others
  - usually have a positive skin test reaction
  - can develop the TB disease later in life without receiving preventive therapy.

**Many people who have the TB infection never develop the TB disease.**

## *How can a food service manager tell if an employee may have active TB?*

An employee with the following symptoms should be checked for TB:

- A bad cough that lasts longer than 2 weeks
- Coughing up blood or sputum
- Pain in the chest
- Weakness of fatigue
- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Chills
- Fever
- Severe night sweats.

## *How can I or my employees get tested for TB?*

- Make an appointment at the Public Health Center operated by the Department of Health Services, County of Los Angeles.
- **ALL TB TESTING AND TREATMENT CAN BE OBTAINED FOR FREE OR AT A LOW COST!**



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES • DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
**PUBLIC HEALTH  
 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706. Telephone (626) 430-5320



**CERTIFIED FOOD HANDLER PROGRAM**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
 PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS & SERVICES  
 HEALTH PROTECTION & DISEASE CONTROL

**PUBLIC HEALTH CENTERS**

The County offers complete TB testing and treatment for free or at low cost to all residents of Los Angeles County.

<p><b>Antelope Valley</b>            335 Bldg. B, East Ave. K-6            Lancaster, CA 93535            (661) 723-4511</p>	<p><b>Pomona Health Center</b>            750 Park Avenue            Pomona, CA 91766            (909) 868-0241</p>
<p><b>Central Health Center</b>            241 North Figueroa Street            Los Angeles, CA 90012            (213) 240-8203</p>	<p><b>South Health Center</b>            1522 East 102<sup>nd</sup> Street            Los Angeles, CA 90002            (323) 563-4053</p>
<p><b>Glendale Health Center</b>            501 North Glendale Avenue            Glendale, CA 91206            (818) 500-5762</p>	<p><b>Torrance Health Center</b>            711 Del Amo Avenue            Torrance, CA 90502            (310) 324-2237</p>
<p><b>Hollywood-Wilshire Health Center</b>            5205 Melrose Avenue            Los Angeles, CA 90038            (323) 769-7883</p>	<p><b>Curtis Tucker Health Center</b>            123 West Manchester Blvd            Inglewood, CA 90301            (310) 419-5333</p>
<p><b>Monrovia Health Center</b>            330 West Maple Avenue            Monrovia, CA 91016            (626) 256-1600</p>	<p><b>Whittier Health Center</b>            7643 South Painter Avenue            Whittier, CA 90602            (562) 464-5350</p>
<p><b>Pacoima Health Center</b>            13300 Van Nuys Blvd.            Pacoima, CA 91331            (818) 896-1903</p>	

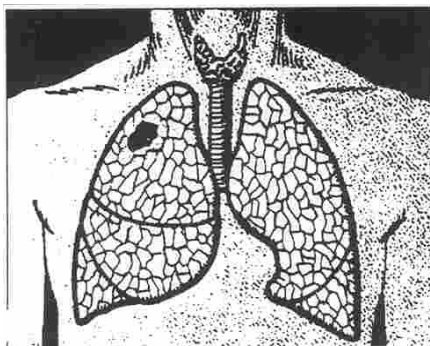
For more information about services or clinic days and times, call the Public Health Center nearest you.  
 For information regarding tuberculosis, call TB Control at (213) 744-6160.

# TUBERCULOSIS FACTS – Exposure to TB

## What is TB?



“TB” is short for a disease called 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** of the lungs or throat 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**. Your immune system traps TB germs with special germ fighters. Your germ fighters keep TB germs from making you sick.

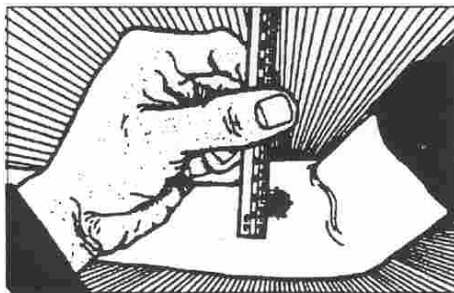
But sometimes, the TB germs can break away and multiply. Then they cause **TB disease**. The germs can attack the lungs or other parts of the body. They can go to the kidneys, the brain, or the spine. If people have **TB disease**, they need medical help. If they don't get help, they can die.

## How was I exposed to TB?

You may have been exposed to TB if you spent time near someone with **TB disease** of the lungs or throat. You can only get infected by breathing in TB germs that person coughs into the air. You cannot get TB from someone's clothes, drinking glass, handshake, or toilet.

## How do I know if I have TB infection?

If you have been exposed to TB germs, you will be given a TB skin test. If it is “positive,” you probably have a **TB infection**. If it is “negative,” you may be retested in a few weeks, just to be sure. If you do have a **TB infection**, you may need medication.



A skin test is the only way to tell if you have **TB infection**.

This test is usually done on the arm. A small needle is used to put some testing material, called tuberculin, under the skin. In two or three days, a health worker will check to see if there is a reaction to the test. The test is “positive” if a bump about the size of a pencil eraser or bigger appears on your arm. This bump means you probably have **TB infection**.



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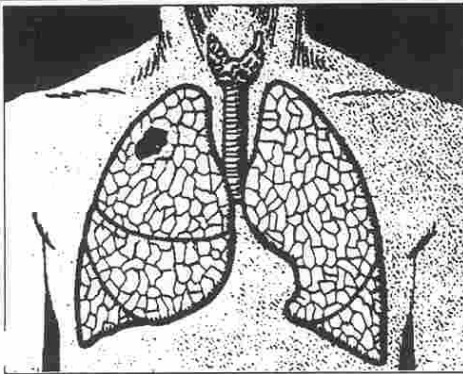


# TUBERCULOSIS FACTS – The TB Skin Test

## What is TB?



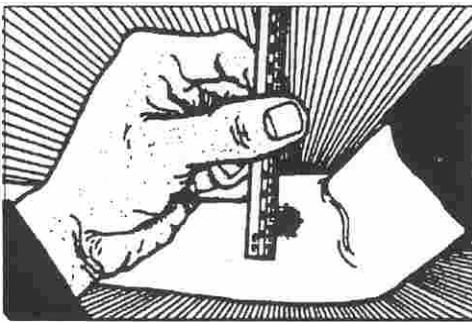
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But sometimes, the TB germs can break away and multiply. Then they cause **TB disease**. The germs can attack the lungs or other parts of the body. They can go to the kidneys, the brain, or the spine. If people have **TB disease**, they need medical help. If they don't get help, they can die.

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The test is “positive” if a bump about the size of a pencil eraser or bigger appears on your arm. This bump means you probably have **TB infection**. You may need medicine to keep from getting sick.

**NOTE: IF YOU HAVE EVER HAD A “POSITIVE” REACTION TO A TB SKIN TEST OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH TB DRUGS IN THE PAST, TELL THE HEALTH WORKER.**



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# TUBERCULOSIS FACTS – TB and HIV (The AIDS Virus)

## What is TB?

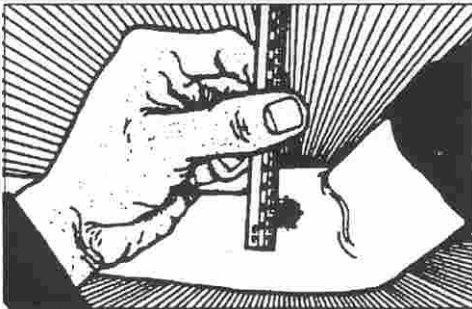


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## How does HIV infection affect TB?



HIV (human immunodeficiency virus, the AIDS virus) helps TB germs make you sick by attacking the germ fighters in your body. If you are infected with HIV and with TB germs, you have a very big chance of getting **TB disease**. The TB germs are much more likely to attack your lungs and other parts of the body. You can be cured, but it takes longer to cure someone with **TB disease** who also has **HIV infection**.

*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 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!**



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# TUBERCULOSIS – TÚ PUEDES PREVENIR LA TB

## ¿Que es la TB?

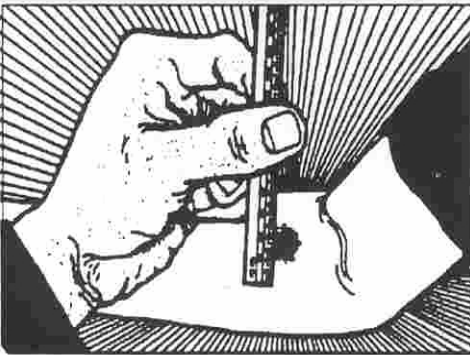


“TB” son las iniciales de la enfermedad conocida como Tuberculosis. La TB es transmitida por pequeños gérmenes que pueden estar suspendidos en el aire. Los gérmenes de la TB son lanzados al aire cuando una persona con TB pulmonar o laríngea tose, estornuda, habla o se ríe. Las personas que se encuentren cerca pueden respirar el germen de la TB dentro de sus pulmones.

El germen de la TB puede vivir dentro de tu cuerpo sin producir enfermedad. Esto se llama **infección tuberculosa**. Tu sistema inmunológico atrapa los gérmenes de la TB con células luchadoras especiales. Estas células luchadoras no permiten que el germen de la TB te enferme.

Algunas veces el germen de la TB puede escaparse causando **enfermedad tuberculosa**. Los gérmenes pueden atacar los pulmones u otros órganos o partes de tu cuerpo. Pueden alojarse en los riñones, cerebro, vértebras, piel. Cualquier persona con **enfermedad tuberculosa** necesita ayuda médica. Si no busca ayuda, la persona puede morir.

## ¿Como puedo saber si tengo infección por TB?



La **prueba de la tuberculina** es la única manera de saber si tienes **infección por TB**. La prueba es “positiva” si una hinchazón del tamaño de la goma de un lápiz o mayor aparece en tu brazo. La hinchazón significa que probablemente estés **infectado**.

Si estás infectado con el virus de inmunodeficiencia humana (HIV), el virus del SIDA, puede que tu cuerpo no reaccione a la prueba de la tuberculina. El Centro de Salud local te ofrecerá otras pruebas.



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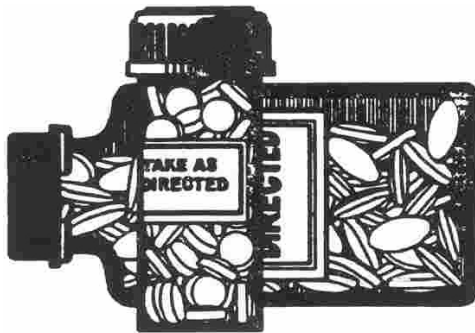


## ¿Que puedo hacer si tengo infección por TB?

Si tienes **infección por TB** puedes necesitar tratamiento preventivo para no desarrollar **enfermedad tuberculosa** más adelante. A esto le llamamos **terapia preventiva**. La medicina que más se utiliza es la Isoniacida (INH).

Si no recibes terapia preventiva, la **infección por TB** puede convertirse en **enfermedad tuberculosa**. Las personas más susceptibles para adquirir la enfermedad por TB son:

- Alcohólicos o usuarios de drogas intravenosas
- Personas con ciertas condiciones médicas como diabetes, ciertos tipos de cáncer, que estén bajo peso y, especialmente,
- Personas con HIV (virus que causa el SIDA)



Estas condiciones hacen que tu cuerpo se debilite. Cuando tu cuerpo está débil no puede luchar contra los gérmenes de la TB.

Es muy importante que te tomes tu tratamiento preventivo como tu doctor te ha recomendado. Se toma por lo menos de seis (6) meses a un año para matar todos los gérmenes de la TB.

Recuerda, tú siempre tendrás los gérmenes de la TB en tu cuerpo a no ser que los mates con la medicina correcta.

## ¿Que sucede si abandono la facilidad antes de completar el tratamiento?

Pregunte en el Centro de Salud local donde puedes ir para continuar con el resto de tu tratamiento. El Departamento de Salud o tu médico te ayudará conseguir las medicinas que necesitas. Protege a tu familia y amigos de la TB—**toma tus medicinas**.



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# TUBERCULOSIS FACTS –TB Can Be Cured

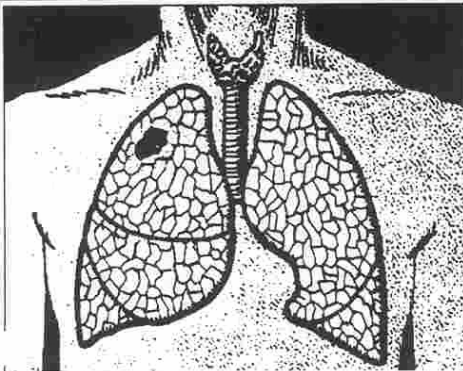
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But sometimes, the TB germs can break away and multiply. Then they cause **TB disease**. The germs can attack the lungs or other parts of the body. They can go to the kidneys, the brain, or the spine. If people have **TB disease**, they need medical help. If they don't get help, they can die.



If you have **TB disease**, you may:

- Feel weak,
- Lose your appetite,
- Lose weight,
- Have a fever, or
- Sweat a lot at night.

These are signs of **TB disease**. These signs may last for several weeks. Without treatment, they usually get worse.

If the **TB disease** is in your lungs, you may:

- Cough a lot,
- Cough up mucus or phlegm (“flem”),
- Cough up blood, or
- Have chest pain when you cough.

You should always cover your mouth when you cough!

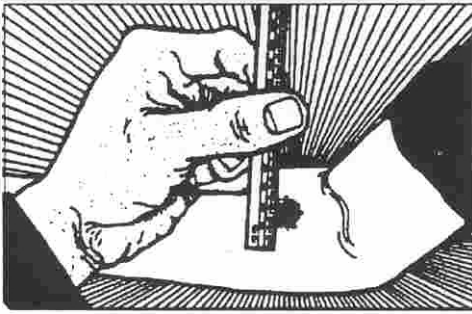
If you get **TB disease** in another part of the body, the symptoms will be different. Only a doctor can tell if you have **TB disease**.



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## How do I know if I have TB infection?

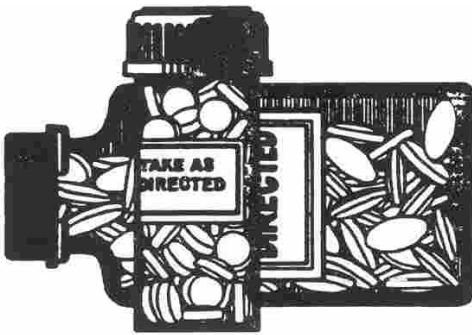


A skin test is the only way to tell if you have **TB infection**. The test is “positive” if a bump about the size of a pencil eraser or bigger appears on your arm. This bump means you probably have **TB infection**.

Other tests can show if you have TB disease. An X-ray of your chest can tell if there is damage to your lungs from TB. TB germs may be deep inside your lungs. Phlegm (“flem”) you cough up will be tested in a laboratory to see if the TB germs are in your lung.

If TB germs are in your lungs or throat, you can give TB infection to your friends and visitors. They can get sick with TB disease. You should be separated from other people until you can’t spread TB germs. This probably won’t be for very long, if you take your TB medicine.

## Can TB disease be cured?



Yes! TB disease can be cured by using special drugs that kill TB germs. But TB germs are strong. It takes at least six to nine months of medication to wipe them all out. It is very important that you take all your medication.

If you stop taking medication too soon, it is a big problem. The TB germs that are still alive become even stronger. You may need stronger drugs to kill these “super” TB germs. This doesn’t have to happen. If you take all of the medicine, the TB germs will die.

A few people have side effects to anti-TB drugs. You will get tests to check on this.

## What if I’m released before I finish my medication?

Ask a health worker where you should go to get the rest of your medicine. The local health department or your doctor outside will make sure you get the medicine you need. Protect your family and friends from TB—take all your anti-TB drugs!



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