## What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB most often occurs in the lungs, but can occur anywhere in the body.

## How is TB Spread?

TB spreads from person to person through the air. When a person with contagious TB disease coughs, laughs, or sings, the TB bacteria are released into the air. Persons who breathe air that contains TB bacteria may become infected.

**Anyone can catch TB!** But, people most likely to get TB infection are those in close contact with a person who has contagious TB disease.

## What is a contact?

A contact is a person who spends time with someone who has contagious TB disease.

## What is TB infection?

TB infection is when you have the TB bacteria in your body, but the bacteria do not make you sick. You can get TB infection when you breathe air that contains TB bacteria.

TB infection alone will not make you sick. But, having TB infection does mean that you can get TB disease in the future. There are many risk factors that will increase your chance of getting TB disease. Talk to your doctor, nurse or local health department about your risk factors for TB disease.

## What is drug resistant TB?

TB is drug resistant when one or more of the medicines used to kill the TB bacteria do not work.

## If I have been in contact with a person who has drug resistant TB, what should I do?

**Don't panic!** Visit your doctor, nurse or local health department to learn more about drug resistant TB and what you can do to prevent TB disease.

Some people may be able to take medicine to prevent TB disease. But, depending on the strain of TB you were exposed to, you may not be able to take any medicine.

## What happens if I cannot take medicine for my drug resistant TB infection?

Having drug resistant TB infection does not increase your chances of getting sick with TB disease.

**Remember, most people who have TB infection do not get sick with TB disease.**

In the first year after your exposure to TB infection, your doctor, nurse or health department may want you to have several x-rays or other exams. These tests are needed, because you are more at risk for TB disease during this time.

## How will I know if I develop TB disease?

A person with TB disease will feel sick and have symptoms. A common symptom of TB disease in the lungs is a **cough** that lasts more than a few weeks, sometimes with mucus and/or blood. You may also feel **very tired**, **not want to eat**, **lose weight**, **have a fever**, **sweat a lot at night**, and/or have **chest pains**.

TB disease can occur anywhere in the body. Symptoms of TB disease

outside the lungs include fever, weight loss, loss of appetite, and/or night sweats. Other symptoms will depend on the body part affected.

If you have symptoms of TB disease, see a doctor immediately.

Tell your doctor that you were in contact with a person with drug resistant TB disease. Your doctor can call the health department for more information.

### What can I do to stay healthy?

Eat healthy foods, get plenty of rest and talk to your doctor about any other medical conditions you may have. A healthy lifestyle may prevent you from becoming sick with TB disease.

People at highest risk for getting TB disease are those who have HIV infection. A healthy lifestyle to prevent HIV infection is also very important in preventing TB disease. Talk to your doctor, nurse or local health department about protecting yourself from HIV.

Local Health Department Information:

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VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Protecting You and Your Environment

Division of Disease Prevention
hiv • std • tb • Rx

Virginia Department of Health
Tuberculosis Control Program
Telephone: 804-864-7906
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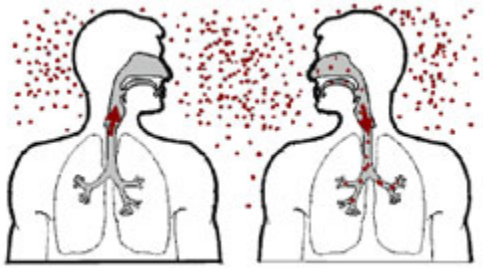
http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/ DiseasePrevention/
Programs/Tuberculosis

# Drug Resistant TB



# *Facts For Contacts*