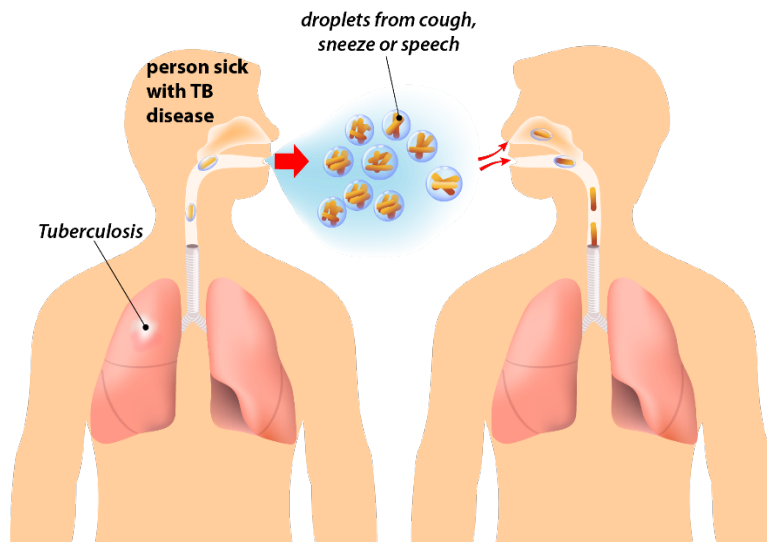


Tuberculosis (TB)

What is TB and how do I get it?

TB is a disease, caused by bacteria, that can spread from one person to another. Most often TB affects the lungs, but you can find it in any part of the body.

TB bacteria are spread through the air in tiny droplets when a person who is sick with TB in their lungs coughs, sneezes, or speaks.



Source: Shutterstock

If you breathe in these droplets, you may become infected with the TB bacteria without knowing it because you will not feel sick and will not have symptoms. This is called **latent TB infection (LTBI)**. Millions of people in the United States have TB infection, and without treatment, they are at risk for developing **TB disease**. That is why getting tested and taking medicine for prevention is important.



Source: https://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/infographic/images/takeontbi/2018_Take_on_LatentTB_Infection2.pdf

What are the symptoms of TB?

Symptoms of **active TB disease** may include:

- Cough lasting three or more weeks
- Coughing up blood
- Losing weight
- Night sweats
- Fatigue
- Fever

Remember, people with **latent TB infection** do not feel sick and do not have any symptoms.

Who is more likely to become infected with TB?

If you have one or more of the following risk factors, you have a greater chance of getting TB infection:

- Lived or spent time in a country where TB is common
- Lived or spent time with someone with active TB disease
- Lived or worked in a congregate setting (such as a shelter, jail, long-term care or assisted living facility)
- Worked in a healthcare setting
- Homeless, especially within the last two years
- Drug user
- Infant, child, or adolescent who has spent time with an adult at increased risk for TB infection or TB disease

BCG Vaccine Does Not Prevent TB

Unlike many vaccines that are very good at preventing disease, the bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine is used in many countries with a high burden of TB to prevent TB complications in infants and young children. It does NOT prevent you from getting TB infection if you are exposed to someone with active TB disease. If you have latent TB infection, it does NOT prevent you from developing active TB disease.

How do I get tested for TB?

There are two tests that can tell you have TB bacteria in your body: a skin test and a blood test.

For more information, or to get tested, call your medical provider or the Arlington County Public Health Division at 703-228-4980.

Can TB be treated?

Yes. Latent TB infection and active TB disease can be treated and cured by taking all the medicine your medical provider orders.

If you have TB risk factors or TB symptoms, call your medical provider or the Arlington County Public Health Division at 703-228-4980.

If you live outside of Arlington County, see the Virginia Department of Health's website to find your local health department:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator>