

Tuberculosis (TB)

1. What is TB?

Tuberculosis is a disease that usually attacks the **lungs** but can affect almost any part of the body.

2. What causes TB?

TB is caused by the bacterium ***Mycobacterium tuberculosis***. The bacterium can cause disease in any part of the body, but it normally enters the body through the lungs and resides there. Most people are able to fight the infection by immune system. In fact, healthy people who are infected with tuberculosis have a 5-10% chance of converting to active disease over their lifetime. This is often described as Latent TB Infection (LTBI). LTBI may develop into active tuberculosis someday, often when the person's immune system becomes weakened.

3. What are the Signs and symptoms of TB?

A person infected with TB does not necessarily feel ill – and such cases are known as **silent or “latent”** infections. When the lung disease becomes “active”, the symptoms include cough that last for more than two or three weeks, **weight loss, loss of appetite, fever, night sweats and coughing up blood**. About 25% of people may not have any symptoms (i.e. they remain "asymptomatic"). Occasionally, people may cough up blood in small amounts.

4. How to diagnosis TB?

Chest X-ray is a common way to diagnosis TB. Once it is found abnormal chest X-ray, if the incidence of doubt, the physician will arrange for further examination of bacteria and provide tracking treatment services.

5. Is TB treatable?

Yes. TB can be cured. **DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short-Course)** is the internationally recommended strategy for TB control. In general, patients with TB who are culture positive at baseline are non-infectious after **2 weeks** of treatment. The treatment regimen lasts **6-8 months**.