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What is tuberculosis infection (TBI)?

There are two TB-related conditions: TB infection and TB disease. A person with TB infection has TB bacteria in the body, but does not have the contagious form of TB disease. The body's immune system is able to keep the infection in control. People with latent TB infection do not feel sick, have no symptoms, and cannot spread TB to others. People with active TB disease usually feel sick, have symptoms and can spread TB to others. This fact sheet discusses TB infection; please refer to the fact sheet on TB disease for more information on that condition.

Who gets tuberculosis infection?

A person who was physically close to someone with active TB disease and inhaled TB bacteria into their lungs is most likely to get TB infection. Other risk factors include smoking, prior residence in a country where TB is common, or living in a congregate setting (homeless shelters, migrant farm camps, nursing homes, prisons or jails).

How do people know if they have TB infection?

People who have one of the risk factors listed above should consider being tested for TB infection. This involves having either a TB skin test or TB blood test. If the TB test is positive, the person likely has TB infection. Additional tests such as a chest x-ray and a sample of sputum are needed to determine if the person has TB infection or active TB disease.

What are the symptoms of tuberculosis infection?

There are no symptoms of TB infection and a person with TB infection does not feel sick.

How is tuberculosis infection spread?

A person with TB infection cannot spread TB bacteria to others. People with active TB disease may spread TB bacteria to others.

What is the treatment for tuberculosis infection?

A person with TB infection can take drugs to kill the bacteria and prevent getting active TB disease in the future. There are several medicines used to treat TB infection that involve taking one or more medications for 3-9 months. Talk to your health care provider about which treatment is best for you.

How can I get more information about TB infection?

- If you have concerns about TB infection, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at

the [VDH Local Health Districts page](#).

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [the CDC page on tuberculosis](#) .

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