

TUBERCULOSIS FACTS

TB and HIV (The AIDS Virus)

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 spread. 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 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. But you can be cured.

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 are 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!