

What are some of the possible side effects of LTBI medicine?

Side effects are rare with these pills, but may include...

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dark urine
- Skin rash
- Yellow skin and/or eyes
- Loss of appetite
- Numb hands and/or feet

If you have any of these side effects, immediately tell your doctor, nurse, or trained health worker from the Department of Public Health.

What if I had the BCG vaccine?

BCG, or Bacille Calmette-Guérin, is a TB vaccine that children often get in countries that have a lot of TB. It may protect them from severe forms of TB disease. BCG shots are not used much in the United States. The vaccine may be effective for about one year. This shot may not keep people from getting TB, especially adult pulmonary TB.

What role will the Department of Public Health play?

The Department is concerned about you and your family, and gives treatment for latent TB infection.

If you are treated by Public Health, you may be seen by a physician or TB Extended Role Nurse (ERN). The ERN is a registered nurse who has had special training in managing patients with latent TB infection or active TB disease. This service is provided only by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

For more information on TB, visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/tb or contact your local health department.

Latent TB Infection

What you need to know to stay healthy



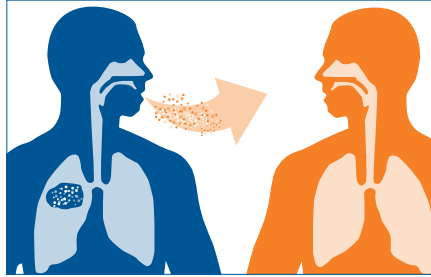
What is Latent TB Infection (LTBI)?

Latent TB infection, or LTBI, means that TB germs are alive but “asleep” in your body. If you have latent TB, you will not have symptoms, may not feel sick, and cannot spread TB germs to other people.

However, if your immune system weakens, these TB germs may “wake up” and multiply. You may then get sick with active TB disease.

What is active TB disease?

Active TB disease means that TB germs are alive and “awake” in your body. If you have active TB disease, you have symptoms like a bad cough, night sweats, fatigue, and weight loss. Also, you can spread TB germs to other people.



TB mainly affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body. If left untreated, TB can lead to death.

How does someone get infected?

TB germs are spread in the air when someone who is sick with active TB disease coughs, sneezes, laughs, speaks, or sings. If you breathe in air that has TB germs, you may get infected. However, you cannot catch TB from clothes, dishes, food, bedding, or physical contact with someone who has active TB disease.

What is the treatment for LTBI?

If you have been infected with TB germs, you may become sick with TB. This can happen right away or several years later.

LTBI can be treated with medicine, most often Isoniazid (INH). You must take this medicine for six to nine months. (Children and persons with HIV will need to take medicine longer, for at least nine months.)

Why should I take medicine if I don't feel sick?

You may develop active TB disease if you do not take medicine for your latent TB infection. Many TB germs are killed after you start taking your medicine, but some stay alive in your body for a long time. As long as you still have TB germs in your body, they can “wake up,” multiply, and make you sick.

If you are taking TB medication, it is important that you finish your medicine, as your doctor or health care provider prescribes.

What is the difference between latent TB infection and active TB disease?

Latent TB Infection

No symptoms
Don't feel sick
Positive skin test (usually)
Chest X-ray normal (usually)
Not contagious (cannot spread TB)
Can develop active TB if treatment not completed

Active TB Disease

Bad cough for 3 weeks or longer
Coughing up blood
Weakness, fatigue
Weight loss
Lack of appetite
Chills, fever, sweating at night
Positive skin test (usually)
Chest X-ray abnormal (usually)

How can I tell if I have LTBI?

Get a TB skin test (TST). After you get a skin test, make sure you go back to your doctor after two to three days for your test results.

What if the skin test result is negative?

A negative result usually means you are not infected. If you were in close contact with someone with active TB disease, you should have another skin test after two to three months.

What if the skin test result is positive?

A positive skin test result usually means that you have been infected with TB germs, but it does not necessarily mean that you have active TB disease.

Other tests, such as a chest X-ray or sputum (phlegm) sample, are needed to find out if you have active TB disease.

When should I get the skin test?

You should get tested for TB if you...

- Have symptoms of active TB
- Have spent a long time with someone who has active TB
- Have a condition that weakens your immune system, like HIV or diabetes
- Have injected illegal drugs
- Have come to the United States recently from an area with a lot of TB, such as Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, or Eastern Europe
- Have worked or stayed in a nursing home, homeless shelter, prison, or other group setting.

