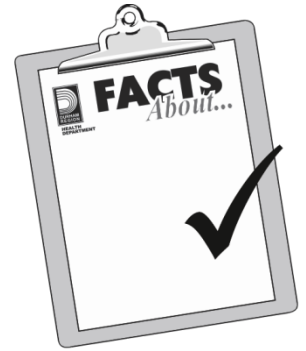




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI)

What is it?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease caused by bacteria (germs). TB usually attacks the lungs but can affect any part of the body.
- When TB germs are in the air, these germs can be inhaled into the lungs.
- Most people who breathe in the TB germs are able to stop them from growing in their body.
- Most people's immune systems trap the TB germs and keep them inactive. This is called latent TB infection (LTBI).
- People with LTBI do not feel sick and do not have any symptoms.
- People with LTBI cannot pass the TB germs to others.
- Some people with LTBI may develop active TB disease.
- Symptoms of TB disease of the lung can include cough, fever, night sweats, weight loss, loss of appetite and tiredness. See *Facts About... Tuberculosis*.

A person with latent TB infection (LTBI)

- Has a positive TST result
- Usually has a normal chest x-ray
- Has TB germs in his/her body that are inactive
- Does not feel sick
- Cannot spread TB bacteria to others
- Can get treatment for LTBI to prevent active TB disease

If your TST is positive, contact the Durham Region Health Department.

How is it spread?

- People with LTBI are not contagious and cannot spread TB.
- The TB germs are not growing.

What do I look for?

- People with LTBI often do not know that they are infected.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

Latent Tuberculosis Infection

- Testing for LTBI is done with a TST or sometimes with a blood test (IGRA). See *Facts About.... Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)*.

How is it treated?

- A person with a positive TST or IGRA test can take TB medication to prevent getting active TB disease in the future.
- TB medications are available free of charge through the Durham Region Health Department.
- If taken properly, the medication can stop the bacteria from developing into active TB disease.
- It is very important for you to see your health care provider first to make sure that you do not already have TB disease before you start taking TB medications.
- Most people feel well when taking these TB medications but any medication can make some people feel sick. It is important to review the side effects of the TB medications and know when to call your healthcare provider.

It is important to take the TB medications as prescribed to ensure adequate prevention of TB disease and to avoid drug resistance in the future. How can I protect myself?

- Discuss testing and risk factors for TB exposure with your healthcare provider.
- If you are planning to travel to a country known to have high rates of TB it is important to have a TST before and after your trip. Areas with high rates of TB include: Asia, Africa, India, the Middle East, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow and encourage others to do the same.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer when hands are not visibly dirty.
- Make sure that you take all medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Follow Canada's Food Guide for Healthy Eating and stay physically active.
- Avoid smoking.
- If you are ill, stay home and isolate yourself from others.

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