

## Signs & Symptoms of TB Disease:

- Cough of 2 weeks or more
- Fever
- Fatigue or Tiredness
- Weight Loss
- Night Sweats
- Blood in Sputum (lung mucus)

If you have any of these symptoms, you should ask your Doctor or Community Health Nurse about Tuberculosis.



## Our Vision

Healthy, Self-Determining  
and Vibrant BC First Nations  
Children, Families and  
Communities.



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

For further information about TB  
please contact your  
Community Health Centre:



First Nations Health Authority  
Tuberculosis Services

Toll-Free: 1.844.364.2232

Fax: 604.689.3302

Email: [fnhatb@fnha.ca](mailto:fnhatb@fnha.ca)

Website: [www.fnha.ca/tuberculosis](http://www.fnha.ca/tuberculosis)

The illustrations used in this FNHA Tuberculosis program information series were selected as part of a contest asking First Nations artists to visually show what Tuberculosis looked like or meant to them. We thank each artist for sharing their vision with the FNHA Health Protection team for use in these publications.



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



## Respiratory Health: What is Tuberculosis?



## What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

TB is a bacteria which is passed through the air when someone with TB Disease coughs, sings or shouts. This bacteria is breathed into the lungs by a person in the same room.



Good news!  
TB can be prevented and cured!

## TB Infection

When you breathe these TB bacteria into your lungs, your body fights back by building a wall around the TB bacteria. You are infected with TB but do not get sick because the germs are inactive.

You will have a positive TB skin test (Latent TB Infection) and a clear chest x-ray but do not feel sick and cannot make anyone sick. You will have a 10% chance of getting TB disease over your lifetime.

## Prevention

If your TB skin test is positive and your chest x-ray is negative, you may be recommended to take a medication for 9 months to **prevent** TB disease.

## TB Disease

If your body's immune defences are unable to stop the TB bacteria, they can become active and make you sick with TB Disease.

You are more likely to get TB disease when your body is weak from:

- HIV/AIDS
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease or failure
- Poor Nutrition
- Cancer
- Medication that weakens the immune system (e.g., Prednisone, Methotrexate, Azathioprine, Imuran, Humira, Ciclosporin, Remicade, Enbrel)

*Pulmonary TB Disease* affects the lungs. This is the only TB that can be passed to others.

TB Disease can also affect any other part of the body (e.g., brain, blood, lymph nodes, bladder, spine). These are not passed to others.

Did you know - TB can be cured!

If you take your TB pills every day (even when you feel better) your TB will be cured.

Most people with TB *do not* need to go to the hospital and can be treated at home.

TB disease can be fatal if left untreated, but this is rare because there are medications to cure TB.

## TB Testing

### TB Skin Test:

- A positive TB skin test means you likely have TB Infection.
- If you have HIV, it is important to get a TB test at the time you find out you are HIV positive and then yearly thereafter
- Sometimes TB skin tests may not react in persons whose immune systems are not working well (e.g., HIV/AIDS, persons on immune suppressing medication) and a blood test to detect TB infection is required.
- ANY person with a negative TB skin test who has TB symptoms should have further TB testing such as chest x-ray and sputum tests.

### Chest X-Ray:

This is done to determine if there are any scars or TB Disease in the lungs.



### Sputum (lung mucus) Test:

3 samples of sputum or mucous are sent to the TB lab to test for TB Disease.

Other samples such as blood or urine may also be sent to the lab.