

# TAKING MEDICINE TO PREVENT TUBERCULOSIS

## WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS (TB) INFECTION?

TB infection is caused by a germ (bacteria). This germ is spread through the air when someone with TB disease coughs, sings or talks. If a person breathes the germ into their lungs it may cause infection. People with TB infection are not considered infectious. 10 per cent of people with TB infection may develop TB disease in their lifetime.

## CAN THE GERMS MAKE ME SICK?

As people get older or if they develop medical conditions that can weaken the immune system, their bodies may not be able to prevent the germs from making people sick. There are **FREE** medications available that will help prevent you from becoming sick with TB.

## HOW DO I FIND OUT IF I HAVE TB INFECTION?

Your doctor can administer a TB skin test on your arm to find out if you have been infected. After a couple days, your doctor will read the skin test. If it is positive, it is likely that you have TB infection. The skin test is not able to tell you when you were infected. Your doctor will likely do more tests (i.e. chest X-ray) before starting you on medications to prevent TB disease. Depending on your health, your doctor will tell you if you should take TB medications to prevent TB disease.

## WHY DO I NEED MEDICINE TO PREVENT TB?

A positive TB skin test means that you may have TB germs in your body. The TB medications kill the germs before they have a chance to spread and make you sick. Medications are available to prevent people with TB infection from developing TB disease.

## WHAT MEDICATIONS DO I NEED?

The medicine given most often is called INH (isoniazid). It is usually given with a vitamin pill (Vitamin B6). Other medications may also be recommended by your doctor.

## HOW LONG DO I TAKE THE MEDICATIONS?

Usually the TB medications are taken for nine months. It is important to take these medications every day, or some germs may stay in your body and make you sick.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
york.ca/tb



## CAN I GET TB DISEASE AFTER I TAKE THE MEDICINE?

People who take their TB medication every day as recommended by the doctor have a lower risk of becoming sick with TB disease.

**TAKE THE MEDICINE AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY.**

## WILL THE MEDICINE MAKE ME FEEL SICK?

Most people feel well and do not have any major side effects when taking TB medication, but some people may feel unwell. To get the best results from your TB medication, your doctor may routinely follow-up with you and order blood tests regularly.

### **STOP TAKING THE MEDICINE AND CALL YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY IF YOU HAVE:**

- stomach cramps/pain
- yellowish skin or eyes
- loss of appetite/nausea or vomiting
- very dark urine
- numbness, tingling, burning or pain in hands and feet
- fatigue/feeling very tired

## DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR THE MEDICINE?

TB medicine is provided for **FREE**. You can simply bring your prescription to one of the following three pharmacies:

### **Health Plus Pharmacy**

Mackenzie Health Richmond Hill Hospital  
10 Trench Street, Richmond Hill,  
ON L4C 4Z3  
**905-883-7500**, Fax **905-883-7502**

### **Dale's Pharmacy**

Markham-Stouffville Hospital  
377 Church Street, Markham, ON  
L6B 1A1  
**905-471-1234**, Fax **905-471-3732**

### **Centric Health Pharmacy**

Southlake Regional Health Centre  
596 Davis Drive, Newmarket, ON  
L3Y 2P9  
**905-830-5988**, Fax **905-830-5994**

You will be given enough medicine to last for up to three months.

## WHAT DO I DO WHEN I NEED MORE MEDICINE?

At least two weeks before you run out of medications, contact your doctor or pharmacy to refill your prescription.

**PLEASE TAKE YOUR MEDICINE EVERY DAY.**

If you have any questions, please call York Region Public Health Tuberculosis Control Program at: **1-877-464-9675 ext. 76000**, TTY **1-866-512-6228**

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