

TB is curable

There's plenty of information, help and support available for people who are affected by TB



Local TB service:



INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

TB Alert information service

Phone: 01273 234770

Email: info@tbalert.org

www.thetruthabouttb.org

Support and advice for people concerned about TB

TB Action Group

Phone: 01273 234770

www.tb-alert.healthunlocked.com

A peer support and advocacy group for people affected by TB

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

Information about TB and a service finder, such as where to find A&E departments etc

Health Protection Agency website:

www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Tuberculosis/

For more information about TB

Department of Health website:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_116689

For TB information leaflets in a range of languages

THE TRUTH ABOUT TB

The Truth About TB in London



www.thetruthabouttb.org

WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS (TB)?

TB is a curable illness caused by airborne bacteria which commonly affects the lungs. TB in the lungs is known as pulmonary TB. It is the only form of the illness that can be infectious, which means it can be passed on.

TB can however affect any part of the body. In fact, less than half of all TB cases in London are actually pulmonary TB.

TB can cause serious health problems – particularly if it is not caught early. But TB is curable and testing and treatment is free and confidential, regardless of immigration status.

In some people the TB bacteria can remain asleep in the body for years. This is known as latent TB. Latent TB can 'wake up' and cause you to develop TB symptoms if your immune system becomes weaker.

HOW DO YOU GET TB?

When someone with infectious TB coughs or sneezes they send droplets into the air that contain TB bacteria.

If you are exposed to these bacteria for a long time you may become ill with TB. You are more likely to catch TB if a relative, someone you live with, or a colleague, has infectious TB.

TB spreads more easily in crowded or poorly ventilated homes.

SYMPTOMS

- a cough for longer than three weeks
- weight loss
- fever
- night sweats
- fatigue or tiredness
- no appetite
- unexplained pain for longer than three weeks

More than half of London's TB cases are non-pulmonary – which means the TB is not in the lungs. People with non-pulmonary TB may experience pain or swelling in the affected part of their body. They are also likely to experience some of the symptoms listed. If you have unexplained symptoms for longer than three weeks you should visit your doctor.

Symptoms of TB can appear slowly and you may not have all the common symptoms



WHO IS LIKELY TO GET TB?

Anyone can get TB, but there are some groups that are more at risk than others including people who:

- were born in or have links to sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian sub-continent or parts of eastern Europe
- are homeless or live in poorly ventilated or overcrowded accommodation
- are dependent on drugs or alcohol
- have a weakened immune system, through HIV or other illness
- have been in prison

40%
of all UK TB
cases are found
in London

TB is
curable and
treatment is
free for
everyone

What action should I take?

If you are worried you might have TB or been exposed to TB bacteria, talk to a doctor as soon as possible.

The sooner you are treated the less likely you are to become seriously ill or to pass TB on to others.

If you do have TB, you will be started on antibiotic treatment and assigned a TB nurse to support you through your treatment. Your TB nurse will ask you to make a list of people you spend most time with. It is very important that these people are also checked for TB, to ensure they do not become seriously ill and to prevent them from passing on the infection to others.

Remember TB is curable and everyone is entitled to free treatment.

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