

Know more about Tuberculosis

TB & Chest Service Telephone InfoLine: 2572 6024

Welcome to the website: http://www.info.gov.hk/tb_chest

What is Tuberculosis ?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an airborne infectious disease caused by tubercle bacillus. The bacteria usually invades the lungs causing pulmonary TB, but may also invade other parts of the body such as lymph nodes, brain, kidneys, skin, bones or joints.

Mode of Transmission

When an infectious TB patient coughs or sneezes, small droplets containing the bacteria are generated and spread in the air. Not everyone exposed to a source of TB infection will be infected, and those infected may not develop disease. The occurrence of infection and disease depends on a number of factors, in particular the intensity of exposure, and each individual's immunity. About one out of ten infected individuals will develop disease as a life-time risk. The disease may develop weeks, months, years or even decades after infection. Unless disease develops, the infected individual will remain well and non-infectious like other healthy individuals.

What are the Symptoms of Pulmonary TB ?

Persistent cough

Weight loss

Persistent fever

Blood-stained sputum

Night sweating

Poor appetite

How is Pulmonary TB Diagnosed ?

1. Chest X-ray Examination

Opacities or cavitation may be seen in chest x-ray of patient with TB.

2. Sputum Examination

- Direct smear - tubercle bacilli may be seen after special staining under microscopy.
- Culture - the TB germ may grow in special culture medium in the laboratory.

Sputum examination provides information on whether there are tubercle bacilli present in the sputum, the severity of the disease, and also the patient's treatment progress. Results of smear examination can be available in a few days, while culture results generally require 2 to 3 months.

What is the Treatment for TB ?

TB patient should have early diagnosis and treatment. Nowadays, the treatment for TB is very effective. The usual course of drug treatment lasts for 6 months with a combination of several drugs. The great majority of TB patients can be cured completely with regular drug treatment. Most of TB patients can continue their work or other daily activities during the treatment period.

Points to Note during Anti-TB Drug Treatment:

- Take the correct dose at the scheduled time. Irregular drug treatment will induce the emergence of drug-resistant bacteria inside the body, which will complicate the treatment and full recovery will become more difficult.
- The usual course of drug treatment lasts for at least 6 months or more. Under certain circumstances, the doctor may have to modify the drug treatment to suit the particular needs of individual patients.
- Seek for medical advice if the following symptoms occur e.g. itchiness, skin rash, fever, vomiting, tinnitus (ringing sound in the ears), visual disturbance or any other physical discomfort in case of doubt. Patient should report to the nurse if experiences discomfort or side effects.

In order to ensure complete cure and effective control of TB, the Department of Health in Hong Kong has implemented DOT (**D**irectly **O**bserved **T**reatment) since 1970s. Patients are required to take drugs under direct supervision by clinic nurses. DOT is recommended by the World Health Organization as an effective strategy to ensure drug adherence and control TB. It helps to prevent patients from developing resistance to anti-TB drugs. In addition, nurses can closely monitor patients for any treatment side effects and give advice or take prompt actions when necessary.

Points to Note in Daily Activities:

- Patients should maintain good personal hygiene to prevent the spread of the infection. As the infection is mainly transmitted through air, patients should cover their mouth and nose with tissue paper or handkerchief when sneezing or coughing, and sputum should be flushed away or wrapped in tissue paper before being disposed in dust-bins.
- In general, the infectiousness of TB patients will decrease rapidly after commencement of treatment. Thus, strict isolation is not necessary. However, TB patients should avoid close contact with infants and small children as they have a relatively lower body resistance.

- A healthy lifestyle that includes adequate rest and sleep, balanced diet and adequate exercise should be adopted to build up body resistance. A clean and hygienic environment should be maintained. The windows should be kept open to ensure good ventilation to minimize the chance of infection.

Prevention of TB

Preventive measures:

1. TB patients should receive treatment early to prevent the spread of the infection.
2. Close contacts of TB patients, usually the household contacts, should have early screening. They can attend chest clinic for assessment and examination which may include tuberculin skin testing and/or chest X-ray examination.
3. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle helps to build up body resistance. This includes:
 - Adequate rest and sleep
 - Avoidance of smoking and alcohol
 - Balanced diet
 - Adequate exercise
 - Maintaining a cheerful mood
 - Maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene
 - Breathing fresh air and maintaining good indoor ventilation
4. BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin) vaccination
 - BCG vaccination to newborns and children aged under 15 who have never received BCG before.
5. Promotion of anti-TB campaigns and health education activities
 - To raise public awareness about TB, and to secure community support to fight against the disease.
6. Persons with symptoms suspicious of TB should seek medical advice early from family doctors or at chest clinic.

Scope of Services provided by Chest Clinics :

- Provide free medical services to people with confirmed or suspicion of TB, including chest X-ray examination, medical consultation, investigations and drug treatment.
- Provide individual health interview and health counseling to TB patients by public health nurses to ensure treatment success.
- Provide health education on good personal hygiene to prevent the spread of infection, and also to have better understanding of the disease including its causes, mode of transmission, symptoms, treatment course and the importance of receiving regular drug treatment.

- Any person with queries on tuberculosis could approach clinic nurse or visit TB & Chest Service website: http://www.info.gov.hk/tb_chest

Full-time Chest Clinics

● Wanchai Chest Clinic 1/F, Wanchai Polyclinic, 99 Kennedy Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong	2591 1195
● Sai Ying Pun Chest Clinic 2/F, Sai Ying Pun Jockey Club Polyclinic, 134 Queen's Road West, Hong Kong	2859 8227
● Shaukeiwan Chest Clinic 2/F, Shaukeiwan Jockey Club Clinic, 8 Chai Wan Road, Hong Kong	2560 4522
● Kowloon Chest Clinic G/F, 147A, Argyle Street, Kowloon	2711 2086
● Yaumatei Chest Clinic 2/F, Yaumatei Jockey Club Polyclinic, 145 Battery Street, Kowloon	2388 5939
● Shek Kip Mei Chest Clinic 1/F, Shek Kip Mei Health Centre, 2 Berwick Street, Kowloon	2777 4535
● East Kowloon Chest Clinic G/F, East Kowloon Polyclinic, 160 Hammer Hill Road, Kowloon	2352 0077
● Yung Fung Shee Chest Clinic 1/F, Yung Fung Shee Memorial Centre, 79 Cha Kwo Ling Road, Kowloon	2727 8250
● Yan Oi Chest Clinic 2/F, Yan Oi Polyclinic, 6 Tuen Lee Street, Tuen Mun, New Territories	2404 3740
● South Kwai Chung Chest Clinic G/F, 310 Kwai Shing Circuit, Kwai Chung, New Territories	2419 1721
● Yuen Chau Kok Chest Clinic 1/F, Yuen Chau Kok Clinic, 29 Chap Wai Kon Street, Sha Tin, New Territories	2647 6445
● Tai Po Chest Clinic 1/F, Tai Po Jockey Club Clinic, 37 Ting Kok Road, Tai Po, New Territories	2689 5600

Part-time Chest Clinics

● Sheung Shui Chest Clinic	2670 0211
1/F, Shek Wu Hui Jockey Club Clinic, 108 Jockey Club Road, Shek Wu Hui, Sheung Shui, New Territories	ext. 20
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● Yuen Long Chest Clinic	2443 8540
G/F, Yuen Long Jockey Club Health Centre, 269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long, New Territories	
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● Sai Kung Chest Clinic	2792 2601
G/F, Mona Fong Clinic, 23 Man Nin Street, Sai Kung, New Territories	
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● Cheung Chau Chest Clinic	2986 2201
G/F, St John Hospital, Cheung Chau Hospital Road, Tung Wan, Cheung Chau	
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● Tung Chung Chest Clinic	3575 8393
1/F, Tung Chung Health Centre, 6 Fu Tung Street, Tung Chung, Lantau Island	
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