

Prevention and Management of Tuberculosis

Institution Setting

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 bacilli. The bacteria usually invades the lung, 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 the disease as a life-time risk. The disease may develop weeks, months, years, or even decades after the infection. Unless disease develops, the infected individual will remain well and non-infectious like other healthy individual.

Symptoms of Pulmonary TB

- Persistent cough
- Weight loss
- Poor appetite
- Night sweating
- Persistent fever
- Blood-stained sputum

Treatment for TB

TB patient should receive treatment early. Nowadays, the treatment for TB is very effective. The great majority of TB patients can be cured completely with drug treatment. The usual course of drug treatment lasts for 6 months with a combination of several drugs. Adherence to regular drug treatment is a pre-requisite for treatment success. The great majority of TB patients can continue their work or other daily activities during the treatment period.

High Risk Group

1. Persons with relatively low body resistance e.g. elderly, newborn babies or persons with chronic illness, will have a higher chance of developing disease if infected by tubercle bacilli.
2. From time to time, tuberculosis may occur in inmates of old age homes. Health care workers of the institutions are in the best position to help the patients to receive appropriate treatment, achieve complete cure and prevent the spread of the infection.

Points to note when the inmate of an institution has TB:

1. After commencement of treatment, the infectiousness of TB patients will decrease rapidly. Thus in general, most TB patients can have their daily activities as usual and strict isolation may not be necessary.
2. Inmates receiving anti-TB treatment should take drugs under close supervision (DOT, Directly Observed Treatment) by the staff of institution. This is to ensure that patients are taking the correct dose of drugs at the scheduled time. Records of drug taking should be kept for future reference during follow-up consultation. These measures are very important as irregular drug treatment will induce the emergence of drug-resistant TB and seriously affect the treatment results.
3. To facilitate drug absorption in the empty stomach, the patient is advised not to take food for 2 hours before and after taking drugs.
4. Health care workers of the institutions have to observe whether the patients experience any discomfort or side effects of drugs after taking anti-TB drugs.
 - Possible 'normal' reactions may occur after taking anti-TB drugs, such as reddish orange discoloration in stool, tear, urine or nasal discharge 4 to 6 hours after medication, transient nausea, flushing, and transient numbness around the mouth. When these reactions occur, it is usually not necessary for the patient to see the doctor.
 - Seek for medical advice if the following symptoms occur: dizziness, persistent nausea, vomiting, reduced appetite, jaundice (yellowish discoloration of skin and sclera), fever, itchiness, skin rash, tinnitus (ringing sound in the ears), visual disturbance, joint pain and any other physical discomfort in case of doubt.
5. Ensure patients attend regular follow-up and complete the whole course of treatment.
6. Patients should have a balanced diet. Nutritious food such as meat, vegetables, fruit, eggs and milk can be consumed without any special restriction.
7. Stop smoking and avoid alcohol.
8. The nose and mouth should be covered with tissue paper or handkerchief during sneezing and coughing. Do not spit in public areas. Sputum should be flushed away or wrapped in tissue paper before disposed in dust-bins.
9. Maintain a clean and hygienic environment with good ventilation.
10. Depending on the assessment of each individual case, arrangement may be made if necessary

for those who have been in contact with the index patient to undertake examination like chest X-ray examination. If other inmates are found to develop symptoms suspicious of TB, they should be arranged to seek early medical advice.

Your support and participation is important in the prevention and control of TB. Should there be any opinion or enquiries, please contact staff of chest clinics of Department of Health and we will offer assistance whenever possible.

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

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