

Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment (TPT)

You have a positive skin test. This means that you have TB germs sleeping inside your body. This is called **TB infection**. You can take medication to prevent the sleeping TB germs from waking up and becoming **TB disease**.

How did I get the TB germs?

At some point in your life, you spent lots of time with someone who had TB disease in their lungs. When they sneezed or coughed, the TB germs spread in the air, and you breathed them into your lungs. Your immune system is keeping the TB germs asleep right now.

What is the difference between TB infection and TB disease?



If your immune system is strong, it can wall off the TB germs and keep them asleep.

- You **do not feel sick**
- You cannot spread TB (non-contagious)
- TB germs are **asleep** inside your body
- Positive skin test
- Chest x-ray may be normal

If your immune system is weak, the TB germs may wake up and begin to grow.

- You feel **sick**
 - Cough (more than 3 weeks)
 - Fever
 - Feel tired
 - Loss of appetite
 - Weight loss
 - Night sweats
- You can spread TB (**contagious** – if lung TB)
- TB germs are **awake** and **growing** inside your body

Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment (TPT) medication is free from public health

There are a few treatment options. Talk to your Doctor or Nurse to see which treatment is best for you.

Taking TPT medication

- Take your medication as prescribed to ensure the most effective treatment.
- Set an alarm or use a mobile app to help you remember to take your medication every day.
- TB medication work best on an empty stomach. If it upsets your stomach, you may take it with a little bit food to prevent this.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking TB medication. Taking TB medication with alcohol could damage your liver.
- Only stop taking your medication if you experience any side effects (see list below).

Possible medication side effects

Most people feel well, but TPT medication can make some people feel sick.

Call your doctor or nurse right away if you have any of the following:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Fever
- Very dark urine
- Loss of appetite
- Skin rash or itchy skin
- Feeling very tired or weak
- A tingling feeling in fingers or toes (vitamin B6 is often taken with INH to prevent this)

Can I still get TB disease after I take TPT medication?

People who take the TPT medication as prescribed almost never get sick with TB disease.

Reasons to take TPT medication

- Taking the TPT medication prevents the sleeping TB germ from waking up, so you will not get sick with TB disease.
- TPT medication requires less pills compared to medication for TB disease. Medication for TB disease requires taking many more pills.
- If you get sick with TB disease, you may not be able to participate in your daily activities such as work and school for a certain period of time.
- Protect yourself, your family, and friends

Questions? Please call Toronto Public Health TB Prevention Team: **(416) 392-7457**
or e-mail us: targettb@toronto.ca