

Tuberculosis (TB)

New Entrant Screening and Latent TB



Get screened and find out if you have TB infection before you develop TB disease!

Screening and treatment for TB are free.

What does this leaflet cover?

- What is Tuberculosis (TB)?
- Do I need screening for TB?
- What will the screening involve?
- What does my test result mean?
- What is the difference between latent TB infection and TB disease?
- What is the treatment for TB?
- Can I catch TB again?

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection caused by a germ called *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis*. TB is spread through inhaling tiny droplets from the coughs or sneezes of a person with TB disease. TB mainly affects the lungs. However, the infection can spread to many parts of the body. Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. As a result, two TB related conditions exist: latent TB infection and TB disease.

It is only through early recognition, diagnosis and treatment that we can prevent the onwards spread of TB.

Do I need screening for TB?

If you have been in close contact with a person with TB disease you will be contacted to arrange screening if it is thought you may have been at risk of catching the TB infection.

If you are from a country where TB disease is more common you will be offered screening when you arrive in the UK. This may be in addition to any screening you had as part of a visa application.

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) SCREENING

If you have arrived in the UK within the last five years and were born in one of the countries listed below and have not been screened for TB, please ring 01423 555734 for free confidential TB screening.



What will the TB screening involve?

You will be given a short health assessment to find out if you have any symptoms of TB and if you have received all appropriate vaccinations. You will also be asked if you have been in close contact with anyone with TB and if you have received any treatment or screening for TB in the past.

You may be offered one or more of the following tests to identify if you have been infected with TB but have not yet developed symptoms:

- **Mantoux skin test**
- **TB blood test (IGRA)**
- **HIV blood test**
- **Chest x-ray**



The results of your test(s) will determine what advice or treatment is best for you.

What does my test result mean?

Mantoux skin test – A small amount of fluid called PPD (Purified Protein Derivative) will be injected just under the skin using a small needle. The fluid is protein from dead TB bacteria; you cannot catch the disease from this test.

If you have no skin reaction the result is negative, which means you are unlikely to have TB.

If you have had the BCG vaccination (vaccination to protect against TB) it is normal to have a small reaction to the skin test.

A larger reaction would indicate that you may have had exposure to TB in the past and you will need some more tests to see if you have TB.

TB blood test (IGRA) – The TB blood test is sometimes done after or instead of the Mantoux test. If the result is negative and you have no symptoms of TB it is unlikely you have TB.

If the result is positive and you have no symptoms of TB disease it is likely that you have latent TB infection.

HIV blood test - You may be asked about your HIV status as having HIV infection and TB together can make you very sick. If you don't know, you may be offered a HIV blood test.

Chest x-ray – A chest x-ray will show if you have any TB disease in your lungs.

What is the difference between latent TB infection and TB disease?

Latent TB Infection

People with latent TB infection do not feel sick and do not have any symptoms. They are infected with *M. Tuberculosis*, but do not have the disease as their immune system is keeping it dormant. The only sign of TB infection is a positive reaction to the Mantoux test or TB blood test. **Persons with latent TB infection are not infectious and cannot spread TB infection to others.**

Without treatment, about 10% of people with latent TB infection will develop TB disease at some point in their lives. About half of those people develop TB disease in the first two years of infection. This figure is higher for people who have a weakened immune system especially those with HIV infection.

TB Disease

In some people, TB bacteria overcome the defences of the immune system and begin to multiply, resulting in the progression from latent TB infection to TB disease. Some people develop TB disease soon after infection, while others develop TB disease later when their immune system becomes weak.

The general symptoms of TB disease include:

- Unexplained weight loss.
- Loss of appetite.
- Night sweats.
- Fever.
- Fatigue.
- Swollen glands.

Symptoms of TB of the lungs also include:

- Coughing for 3 weeks or longer.
- Haemoptysis (coughing up blood).
- Chest pain.
- Shortness of breath.

Other symptoms depend on the part of the body that is affected.

People with TB disease are considered infectious and may spread TB bacteria to others.

What is the treatment for TB?



Latent TB infection and TB disease can be treated with specific antibiotics.

You will not have to pay for TB treatment - it's FREE.

Latent TB Infection

If tests indicate you have latent TB infection and you are aged 65 years or younger, you should be offered treatment. The medicines used to kill the TB bacteria are specific antibiotics and treatment usually lasts 3 or 6 months. If you are older than 65 years, your doctor should discuss the possible benefits and risks before offering you any treatment for latent TB.

If you have HIV or are a healthcare worker, you should be offered treatment, whatever your age.

TB disease

If you are diagnosed with TB disease, you will have a stronger dose of specific antibiotics used to treat TB. You will have to take your tablets for at least 6 months and it is vitally important to complete the whole course of antibiotics to cure the TB. If you don't, the TB may return in a form that is resistant to the usual drugs and this is much more difficult to treat.

If TB disease is not treated properly, it may lead to death.

Can I catch TB again?

Yes. The treatment you receive for latent TB infection or TB disease only treats the TB bacteria in your body now. There is the possibility that you could catch new TB bacteria if you are around someone else with TB disease in their lungs. However, most healthy people would not need to be treated again.

BCG Vaccine

It is important to know that the BCG vaccine works best to prevent the more serious forms of TB in children. However, the BCG vaccine does not prevent TB in all cases so you should still be aware of the symptoms and take up TB screening.

The BCG is no longer given routinely in the UK unless specific criteria are met, in which case it would be given at birth.

Contact the TB nurses for more information or to book an appointment. The TB and New Entrant Assessment Team cover North Yorkshire and York and work closely with the local hospitals, GP surgeries and Public Health England.

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as large print), please contact the TB and New Entrant Assessment Team on the number below.

TB and New Entrant Assessment Team
Telephone number - 01423 555734
Email: tb@hdft.nhs.uk