

Treating latent tuberculosis (TB) disease

Information for the community

Latent or 'sleeping' tuberculosis (TB) infection is when you have the TB germ in your body but it's not making you sick.

Lots of people have latent TB infection and don't even know it, but it shows up on a skin or blood test. It's very important to treat latent TB infection because it can 'wake up' at any time and make you very sick. When TB is awake it can spread to your family and community.

Children and people with other health problems like diabetes and kidney disease are more at risk of getting sick.

Medications

If you have latent TB, your doctor will give you a mix of antibiotics (medications) to take either every day or once per week.

You will need to take them for three months or more, depending on your age and health.

There are different types of medications which your doctor will explain to you.

Taking medications

It's very important that you take all the medicines your doctor asks you to, for as long as they say.

It might seem strange to be taking medication when you don't feel sick, but it's to protect you and your family and make sure that it gets rid of all of the TB hiding in your body.

If your medication needs to be taken once per week, it's very important to take it on the same day every week.

Your health worker might ask you to come into the clinic or visit you at home. This is to make sure that you are doing okay and to answer any question you may have.

Please tell your doctor or nurse if you have any side effects.

If you know someone getting treatment for latent TB, please support them. Make sure they are doing okay and help them to take all their medications. If you are worried, please tell your clinic.

For more information:

Royal Adelaide Hospital, SA TB Services
Telephone: (08) 7074 1089 (business hours)
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

© Department for Health and Wellbeing, Government of South Australia.

All rights reserved. Last updated February 2024.



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons



Government
of South Australia

SA Health