

WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease usually caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (MTB) bacteria. Tuberculosis generally affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body.

Most infections show no symptoms, in which case it is known as latent tuberculosis.

Around 10% of latent infections progress to active disease which, if left untreated, kill about half of those affected.

Infection of other organs can cause a wide range of symptoms.

Tuberculosis also remains a major killer because of the increase in drug-resistant strains. Over time, some TB germs have developed the ability to survive despite medications.

Drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis emerge when an antibiotic fails to kill all of the bacteria it targets.

The surviving bacteria become resistant to that drug and often other antibiotics as well.

Some TB bacteria have developed resistance to the most commonly used treatments, such as isoniazid and rifampin (Rifadin, Rimactane).

Some TB strains have also developed resistance to drugs such as the antibiotics.

The risk factors are that anyone can get tuberculosis, but certain factors can increase your risk, including weakened immune system.

A healthy immune system often successfully fights TB bacteria.

However, several conditions and medications can weaken your immune system, including:

- HIV/AIDS
- Diabetes
- Severe kidney disease
- Certain cancers
- Cancer treatment, such as chemotherapy
- Drugs to prevent rejection of transplanted organs
- Some drugs used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease and psoriasis
- Malnutrition or low body weight
- Very young or advanced age
- Traveling or living in certain areas