

## How can I remember to take my medicine?

It's not always easy! You will be taking your TB medicine for a long time (6 months or longer), so you should get into a routine. Here are some ways to remember to take your medicine regularly:

- ⦿ Take your medicines at the same time everyday and leave them in the same place.
- ⦿ Put your pills in a weekly dispenser.
- ⦿ Mark off each day on a calendar as you take your medicine.
- ⦿ Try setting an alarm to remind you to take your pills.
- ⦿ Ask a family member or friend to remind you to take your medicine and if you still forget, your doctor or nurse may ask to observe you taking your pills.
- ⦿ Tell your doctor or nurse if you miss a dose of medicine – they will not be angry and will try to help you.

You should also keep all your clinic appointments! Your doctor or nurse needs to see how you are doing.

## More information about TB

If you have TB and would like to know more about it from someone who has had the disease, there is a book called The Tuberculosis Survival Handbook by Paul Mayho (Second Edition). The book costs £14.95 and is available through local bookshops, Gazelle book services and [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), or directly from the publishers, Merit Publishing, website [www.meritpublishing.com](http://www.meritpublishing.com) or email [merituk@aol.com](mailto:merituk@aol.com). The reference number to order the book is ISBN 1873413 149

Protect your family and friends from TB – take all your TB medicine

**Remember** the TB Nurse is here to help and advise throughout your treatment. Please contact your TB Nurse if you feel unwell on your treatment or if there is anything you are unsure of regarding you medication.

Your TB Nurse is:

---

Your Hospital Doctor is:

---

Contact no:

---

Email:

---

**TB Alert** is a unique charity, raising awareness of Tuberculosis in the UK and supporting the work of the NHS by providing information to patients. We support projects in developing countries ensuring that all patients receive proper treatment. With your support we can make a positive, worldwide impact on Tuberculosis and save more lives.



**TB Alert,**

Community Base,  
113 Queens Road,  
Brighton BN1 3XG  
Tel: 01273 234029



For further information or copies of this leaflet, please contact 01273 234770 (office hours only).

To make a donation or volunteer to help TB Alert, please contact 01273 234784 (office hours only).

Or go to our website at [www.tbalert.org](http://www.tbalert.org)

Information given in this leaflet regarding the treatment of Tuberculosis is not intended as a substitute for the knowledge, expertise, skill, and judgment of your TB nurse/doctor or other health care professional. None of the information contained in this leaflet is intended to be used for decisions on TB treatment. Questions and concerns regarding your treatment should be directed to a health care professional.

Original development work by the North West London TB Network



# Tuberculosis (TB) Treatment

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 3666228. Registered Charity No. 1071886. design: worksong, london 020 8552 6300



## What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial infection mostly found in the lungs but which can affect any part of the body. Only TB of the lungs or throat may be infectious and most people will not be infectious within two weeks of starting to take the correct medicine.

## How is it caught?

When someone with TB of the lungs coughs, the germs can get into the air in small droplets and other people can breathe them in. People most likely to catch TB are those who have spent a lot of time with the person with TB (usually partners and other people in the same household, or rarely close work colleagues). TB is not spread by spitting or sharing objects.

## Am I infectious?

Not all people with TB are infectious. You are infectious only if you have TB in your lungs or throat **and** you are coughing up TB germs. You are *not infectious* to other people if you have TB anywhere else in your body apart from your lungs and throat. Your doctor/nurse can give you more information.

## How is TB treated?

Tuberculosis is treated with a combination of medicines for at least six months. The length of treatment depends on whether the TB germ is resistant to any of the medicines and where the TB is in your body. If you do not take your tablets as prescribed by your doctor, the treatment may be prolonged.

## What is the standard treatment for TB?

Your TB doctor or nurse will give you four different medicines for two months. They are:

- ⊙ Rifampicin
- ⊙ Isoniazid
- ⊙ Pyrazinamide
- ⊙ Ethambutol

(Isoniazid, Rifampicin and Pyrazinamide may be combined as Rifater).

Most people will not be infectious after two weeks of taking the medicine.

After two months, the doctor will usually be able to reduce the medicines to:

- ⊙ Rifampicin
- ⊙ Isoniazid

(Rifampicin and Isoniazid may be combined as Rifinah).

## Are medicines for TB safe?

As with all medicines, there may be side effects. Some side effects are minor, others may be more serious. Information about the different tablets and their side effects can be obtained from TB clinic staff.

Rifampicin, Isoniazid, Pyrazinamide and Ethambutol can be taken safely during pregnancy.

Your doctor or nurse will arrange some tests before you start your treatment.

You should tell them if you are using any form of hormonal contraception (oral, implants or other), as the effectiveness is reduced by Rifater.

## How often should I take my medicine?

The medicine needs to be taken every day. If you miss a dose take it as soon as you remember. If you forget and it is time for the next dose, miss out on the one you forgot. Do not take double the dose. Please tell your nurse/doctor if this happens.

## Why do I need to take TB medicine regularly?

TB germs are killed very slowly. It takes at least 6 months for the medicine to kill all the TB germs. You should feel better and may have no more symptoms of TB before this time but you must continue to take your medicine until your doctor stops your treatment. Stopping your treatment too soon, or not taking medicines regularly as prescribed is dangerous, as you may become infectious and develop a type of TB that is difficult and sometimes impossible to treat.

## Should I avoid certain foods or other medicines while I am taking my TB medicine?

No, you can eat anything you like. But you should avoid drinking excessive alcohol.

It is very important to tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines.