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## Tuberculosis: The Connection between TB and HIV (the AIDS virus)

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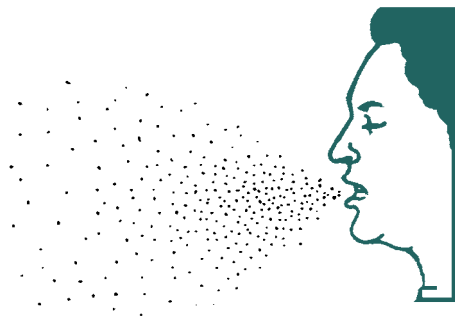
People infected with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) are more likely than uninfected people to get sick with other infections and diseases. Tuberculosis (TB) is one of these diseases.

### What is TB?

TB is a disease that usually affects the lungs. It sometimes affects other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine. TB disease can cause serious health problems, including death, if untreated.

### How is TB spread?

TB germs are spread from person to person through the air. TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, laughs, or sings. TB is NOT spread by sharing silverware or cups, sharing cigarettes, or sharing saliva when kissing someone.



### What are the symptoms of TB?

People with TB disease often feel weak or sick, lose weight, have fever, and have night sweats. If their TB disease is in the lungs, they may also cough and have chest pain, and they may cough up blood. Other symptoms depend on what part of the body is affected.

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

People with TB disease are **sick** from the large number of TB germs that are active in their body. They usually have one or more of the symptoms of TB disease. These people may pass the TB germs to others. TB disease can cause permanent body damage and death. Medicines which can cure TB disease are given to these people.

People with TB infection also have the germs that cause TB in their body. But they are **not sick** because there are not as many of the germs, and the germs lie dormant (sleeping) in their body. They cannot spread the germs to others. However, these people could develop TB disease in the future, especially if they have HIV infection. People with TB infection can take medicine to prevent them from developing TB disease.

### Why is it important to know if I have TB and HIV infections?

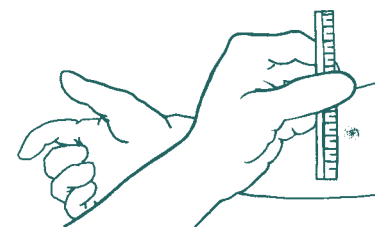
HIV infection weakens the immune system. If a person's immune system gets weak, TB infection can activate and become TB disease. Someone with TB infection and HIV infection has a **very high risk** of developing TB disease. Without treatment, these two infections can work together to shorten the life of the person infected with both.

### Good News!

The good news is that TB infection can be prevented from developing into TB disease and TB disease can be cured. The first step is to find out if you are infected with the TB germ. You can do this by getting a TB skin test.

### What is a TB skin test?

For a TB skin test, a health worker uses a small needle to put some testing material, called tuberculin, just under your skin. This is usually done on the lower inside part of your arm. After you get the test, you must return in 2 to 3 days to see if there is a reaction to the test. If there is a reaction, the size of the reaction is measured.



Some people who are infected with both HIV and TB will not react to the TB skin test. This is because the immune system, which causes the reaction, is not working properly. Anyone who is HIV infected and has a negative skin test should also have other medical tests, especially if they have symptoms of TB disease.



### What must I do if I have TB infection or TB disease?

Get the required follow-up tests. Follow your doctor's advice and take the medicine as prescribed. Today, both TB infection and TB disease can be treated and cured with medication.

It is especially important for people with both TB and HIV infections to take their TB medication. The HIV-weakened immune system makes it **much** more likely for them to develop TB disease than people who are not HIV infected.

TB is one of the few diseases related to HIV infection that is easily prevented and cured with medication.

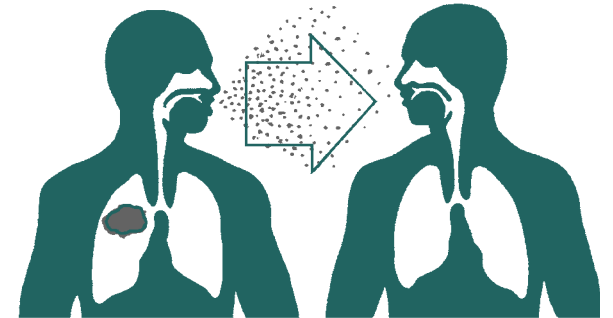


For more information on TB or to get a TB skin test, call your doctor or local health department.

For further information on TB visit:

CDC Division of Tuberculosis Elimination  
Website at  
[www.cdc.gov/tb](http://www.cdc.gov/tb)

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention

