

SAMHS INFO BULLETIN



Compiled by Corporate Communication

WORLD TB DAY 24 MARCH 2012

Tuberculosis is a serious problem all over the world. Between 6 and 10 million in South Africa are infected by the TB germ. It is infectious, so it can be passed on from one person to another person. TB causes more deaths in South Africa than any other infectious diseases.

TB is spread through the air. Germs go into the air when someone who has TB coughs spits or sneezes. Then other people can breathe them in. This is why TB can be spread very easily in overcrowded places.

The TB germ is breathed into the body and then attacks the lungs. It causes holes and other damage in the lungs. It can also spread through the blood to other parts of the body.

Some people believe that you can only get TB if you are poor or if you are an alcoholic, or if you take drugs. This is not true. Anyone can get TB. Not everyone who has TB germs gets sick. It depends on how well your body can fight off disease.

You will find it more difficult to fight off disease if you have the following problems:

- You do not eat healthy foods
- You work in very dusty places e.g. silica exposure (silicosis)
- You drink a lot of alcohol
- You have a chronic disease like heart disease, diabetes, HIV and AIDS or a chronic obstructive lung disease due to smoking.
- You are tired and stressed from doing heavy work, working long hours, or not sleeping enough.

Smoking is always harmful to your health. Your lungs are already damaged if you have TB, and smoking will only make the damage worse.

You will probably have some of the following problems if you have TB:

- Coughing for more than two weeks
- Coughing up blood
- Not wanting to eat
- Feeling pains in the chest
- Losing weight
- Becoming short of breath
- Feeling tired all the time
- Sweating at night
- Getting a fever which comes and goes

Get checked by a health worker if you think you have TB

- You should go to your nearest clinic or doctor as soon as possible
- The sister or doctor will ask you exactly how you are feeling and what your problems are. They will examine you and do sputum test.
- You may also need to have an X-ray of your chest. The health worker will tell you when to come back for the X-ray results and sputum test results.
- If you have TB the people you live with closely need to be checked as a precautionary measure.

If you have TB, it does not mean you have HIV and AIDS. If you think that you might be HIV positive, go to a clinic and have an HIV test. The test is confidential, and you will not have to pay for it. If you are HIV positive, you are more likely to get TB.

Approved by: D Med (SAMHS)