

🌐 The World Health Organization (WHO) provides guidance on how to detect latent tuberculosis infection (LTB). This helps identify and treat individuals at high risk of developing active tuberculosis.

🔑 The most important recommendations are:



## WHO SHOULD BE TESTED FOR “LATENT TUBERCULOSIS (LTB)”?

🦠 In people with **HIV/AIDS**, as they have a much higher risk of latent tuberculosis infection (LTB) progressing to active tuberculosis (disease).

😊 In **close contacts** of confirmed active tuberculosis cases, **especially if they are under 5 years old**.

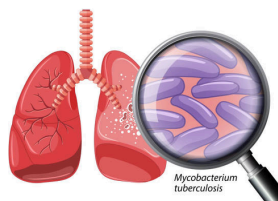
💊 In **patients receiving immunosuppressive treatments** (such as those used to treat autoimmune diseases, cancer, or to prevent organ rejection after transplants).

🏥 In people with **advanced kidney failure** or those on dialysis.

🏠 In people with **silicosis** due to previous work in mines.

🔥 In **homeless individuals**, prisoners, and drug addicts.

🌐 In people coming from **countries with high tuberculosis rates**.



## HOW CAN YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE LTB?

📌 **Tuberculin test (PPD or Mantoux):** a small amount of "fragments" of the tuberculosis bacteria is injected under the skin. After 48-72 hours, the reaction is checked by measuring the swollen area, not the red skin. This test shows if you have been in contact with the bacteria. It can be positive in people who have been vaccinated against tuberculosis.

📌 **Blood test (IGRA).**

These test **ONLY** indicate if we have had contact with the bacteria, whether or not we have the disease.

## MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED

📌 Before starting preventive treatment for LTB, it is essential to rule out the presence of active tuberculosis (disease) through X-rays and other microbiological tests.

⚖️ The decision to treat LTB should be analyzed for each individual, based on their specific benefits and risks



## I AM AN IMMIGRANT, AND IN MY COUNTRY, I HAVEN'T BEEN GIVEN ANY OF THIS. WHY?

The treatment of LTB to prevent it from progressing to disease is something intended for countries with few cases of tuberculosis (less than 100 cases per 100,000 inhabitants).

If you come from a country with many cases, the priority there is treating the sick and preventing transmission. Treating LTB cases would be impossible to handle.

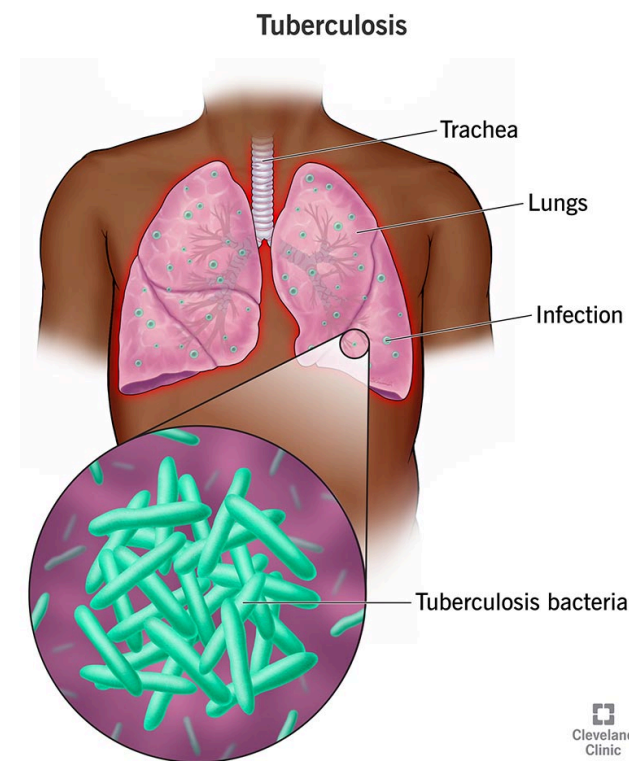
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## LATENT TUBERCULOSIS: INFECTION WITHOUT ILLNESS WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND RELATIVES



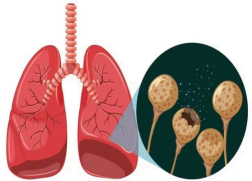
# LATENT TUBERCULOSIS (LTB)

Latent Tuberculosis (LTB) happens when a person is infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria but has no symptoms and cannot spread the infection to others.

However, if the immune system becomes weaker, the infection can become active TB (the person gets sick and becomes contagious).

This happens in about 5–10% of infected people, and it's more common:

- In the **first 5 years** after infection,
- In **children under 5 years old**,
- If you have **recently been in contact with someone who is contagious**.



**LTB=**  
**no symptoms,**  
**no illness**  
**no contagious**

## HOW IS THE INFECTION DETECTED?

People with latent tuberculosis do not show signs of illness because they are not sick.

The tests only detect that the person has been in contact with the bacteria,

**BUT** the bacteria are **NOT** found in the sputum, lymph nodes, or anywhere else in the body.

✗ **NO SYMPTOMS**

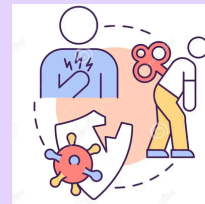
✗ **NO BACTERIA (NO CONTAGIOUS)**

✓ **They only test positive on screening test**  
(Mantoux/PPD o IGRA)



## WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH MY IGRA TEST? HOW MANY TIMES DO I NEED TO TAKE LTB PREVENTIVE TREATMENT?

- The **IGRA and Mantoux tests** will remain positive for life. This “mark” does not go away, not even after completing preventive treatment.
- This **does not mean you are sick** — it only shows that you were in contact with the tuberculosis bacteria at some point.
- It's completely normal and nothing to worry about, so **there's no need to repeat the test**.
- **Preventive treatment for latent TB (LTB)** is given only once — unless you become a close contact again of someone with active, contagious TB. In that case, the treatment can be given without repeating the IGRA or Mantoux tests.



## TREATMENT

- You will need to undergo a **preventive treatment with antibiotics** (isoniazid, rifampicin, or combinations of both) for several months (3 to 6, depending on your doctor's recommendation). This helps **prevent the infection from becoming active and making you sick**.
- It is **very important that you complete the treatment correctly** to avoid developing the disease (active tuberculosis).



## PREVENTION AND CARE

- 🦺 **Contact your doctor** if you belong to a high-risk group. If you have any doubts, reach out to an Infectious Diseases Unit.
- 🥗 **Maintain a healthy diet** to strengthen your body's defense system.
- 🌬️ **Ventilate closed spaces** to reduce the risk of transmission.
- 💊 **Follow your doctor's instructions** if latent tuberculosis is diagnosed.



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

🦠 Latent tuberculosis **is not contagious**, but it can become active (“wake up”) and turn into the disease.

🕒 If detected and treated early, **complications can be avoided**, and it helps protect the health of vulnerable individuals.

💊 Following the treatment **reduces the risk of** developing active tuberculosis.

