

THE
TRUTH
ABOUT
TB

*The Truth
About TB*
in the
South Asian
community

a cough
for 3
weeks

weight
loss

fever

night
sweats

tiredness

no
appetite



www.thetruthabouttb.org



WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS (TB)?

TB is a curable illness caused by airborne bacteria (germs). The number of people getting ill with TB in the UK is increasing. Although anyone can be affected, much of this TB is among people who have links to countries where TB is more common, such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

HOW DO YOU GET TB?

When someone with infectious TB coughs or sneezes, they send droplets into the air that contain TB germs. If you breathe these in you are at risk of getting TB. Usually, your immune system will wipe out any germs. Even if it doesn't get rid of them, there's only a small chance you will become ill right away. The germs can stay asleep in your body, so you will not be ill or able to infect other people. But sometimes, the germs wake up and make you ill with TB. This might happen years after you first breathed them in.

SYMPTOMS

TB is most likely to affect the lungs, but it can affect any part of the body. Common symptoms to look out for are:

- A cough that lasts for over three weeks
- Weight loss
- Fever
- Night sweats
- Extreme tiredness
- Loss of appetite

There are a lot of myths about TB

Some people do not know that it is curable. It is! And TB treatment is free for everyone that needs it. Others think that TB is highly contagious or hereditary. This is not true. Others believe it can be caught from cups, plates or touching someone with TB. This is also not true.

In fact, TB can only be caught if you breathe in the germs coughed or sneezed out by someone else. Sunlight and opening windows can help stop this.

Symptoms of TB can appear slowly. You may not have all the symptoms and TB symptoms can be similar to those of other illnesses.



Anyone can get TB, but South Asians living in the UK are at more risk because:

- They have links to a part of the world where TB is more common.
- They may live on a low income, which can be stressful and makes eating healthy food more difficult. This can weaken the immune system, which is the body's natural defence against illnesses such as TB.
- They may live in crowded or poorly ventilated housing: conditions where TB germs can spread more easily.

What action should you take?

If you have any symptoms that could be TB or you are worried that you have breathed in TB bacteria, you should go to your family doctor. The sooner you are treated, the less likely you are to become more seriously ill or to pass TB on to your family or friends. If you do not have a doctor or if you would prefer to speak to another doctor, speak with your local doctor's surgery staff, or visit www.nhs.uk to find information on drop-in centres in the area. If you are seriously ill, you can get treatment at your nearest Accident & Emergency (A&E) hospital department.

You may have some worries about using health services. Perhaps you are concerned about privacy or that you won't be taken seriously. It's important to know that NHS diagnosis and treatment is confidential. Doctors are there to help you, and will take you seriously if you say that you are concerned about TB. You may prefer to see a female doctor. You are welcome to ask for this. If you need an interpreter, you can ask for one, or ask to take someone you trust along to interpret for you – perhaps from an Asian community support organisation.

There's plenty of information, help and support available for people who are affected by TB. If you are worried that you might have TB ask for advice on testing and treatment. If you have been diagnosed with TB ask what support is available to help you take your medication – it is really important that you do so that you get better and do not develop drug-resistance or pass TB on to others.

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GETTING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

IN BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham Chest Clinic

Phone: 0121 424 1950

NATIONWIDE

TB Alert information service

Phone: 01273 234770

Email: info@tbalert.org

www.thetruthabouttb.org

Support and advice for people concerned
about TB

TB Action Group (TBAG)

Phone: 01273 234770

<http://tb-alert.healthunlocked.com>

A peer support and advocacy group for people
affected by TB

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

Information about TB and a service finder