



TB is curable

There's plenty of information, help and support available for people who are affected by TB

THE TRUTH ABOUT TB

What should I know about **TB**, drugs and alcohol?



WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION AND SUPPORT?

<p>TB Alert information service Phone: 01273 234030 Email: contact@tbalert.org www.thetruthabouttb.org TB support and advice</p>	<p>FRANK Phone: 0300 123 6600 www.talktofrank.com Friendly, confidential drugs advice. You can also search online for support near you</p>
<p>TB Action Group (TBAG) Phone: 01273 234030 Email: tbag@tbalert.org TB peer support and advocacy group</p>	<p>NHS Choices www.nhs.uk Information about TB and a service finder, such as where to find the nearest A&E department or GP practice</p>

Find & Treat
Phone: 020 3447 9842
Email: uclh.findandtreat@nhs.net
Covers London with a mobile x-ray unit and TB outreach services

www.thetruthabouttb.org

TB Alert is the UK's national tuberculosis charity, tackling TB both in this country and internationally.



What is tuberculosis (TB)?

TB is an illness caused by airborne bacteria. It can cause serious health problems – particularly if it is not caught early. You have a greater risk of getting TB if you smoke or drink a lot, or take drugs. This is because smoking, alcohol and drugs weaken your immune system, the body's defence against illness. But TB is curable, and testing and treatment are free and confidential.

TB bacteria can remain asleep in your body for years. This is known as latent TB. Latent TB can 'wake up' making you ill, usually when your immune system is under pressure.

How do you get TB?

TB in the lungs or throat are the only forms of the illness that can be infectious – meaning they can be passed to others. Though TB can affect any part of the body.

When someone with infectious TB coughs or sneezes they send TB bacteria into the air. If you breathe these in over a long period of time you may become ill with TB. You are more likely to catch TB in crowded or poorly ventilated conditions.

TB symptoms can appear slowly and you may not have all of them



The effects of alcohol and drugs can hide your TB symptoms

Symptoms:

- a cough for 3 weeks
- weight loss
- fever
- night sweats
- fatigue or tiredness
- no appetite

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Am I likely to get TB?

Anyone can get TB, but people drink or smoke heavily, or take drugs, are at more risk because:

- alcohol and drugs damage your body and weaken your defences against illnesses
- your diet may not provide all the nutrients you need to stay healthy
- you may spend time in places where it is easier for TB to spread, such as crowded or poorly ventilated accommodation
- you may be around other people who have TB but don't know it: which means they don't know they are passing it to others.

TB is curable and treatment is free

What action should I take?

If you are worried about TB talk to a doctor as soon as possible. The sooner you are diagnosed and treated the less likely you are to become seriously ill or to pass TB on.

If you don't have a GP, go to an NHS walk-in centre – or A&E in an emergency. In London, call the Find & Treat team on 020 3447 9842 to find out about a free chest x-ray. Drug and alcohol services are also a good source of advice and support.



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