

someone with TB stops taking the medication before the treatment is finished, he or she can become sick again.

**IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO TB**

If you think have been around someone with TB disease, you should go to your doctor or health department for a TB test.

**For more information about tuberculosis on the Internet, please visit:**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
[www.omhrc.gov](http://www.omhrc.gov)



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*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

*The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

*The Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE)*



## What is Tuberculosis?



[www.refugees.org](http://www.refugees.org)

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## WHAT IS TB?

Tuberculosis, or “TB,” is a contagious disease caused by germs that are spread through the air from person to person. A person with TB can die from the disease if not treated with medication.

## HOW IS TB SPREAD?

TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB coughs, sneezes, sings, spits or laughs. Other people who breathe the air containing TB germs can become infected.

## WHO GETS TB?

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that nearly six million people worldwide are infected with the bacteria that cause TB. Every year, nearly two million people worldwide die from TB. People who come into daily contact with people with TB are at risk for infection. This includes classmates, co-workers, family members or housemates.

## HOW IS LATENT TB DIFFERENT THAN ACTIVE TB DISEASE?

People with latent TB have the bacteria that

cause TB in their body but the bacteria are not active and the people are not sick. People with latent TB cannot pass TB to others, but can develop active TB in the future.

People with active TB have TB disease. This means the bacteria that cause TB are actively multiplying and destroying tissues in the body. People with TB disease have symptoms of TB and can pass the disease on to others, particularly people they see every day like co-workers, classmates and family members.

## DRUG-RESISTANT TB

If someone with TB does not take his or her medication correctly, or if he or she stops taking the medicine too soon, the germ that causes TB can become resistant to that medication. That means the medication won't work anymore, which means that the person will have to be given a different medicine—possibly stronger—for longer than it would take to finish the original treatment. Drug-resistant TB is more difficult and expensive to treat.

## HOW IS TB TREATED?

**TB CAN BE CURED!** It takes a long time to cure TB. TB patients must take several drugs for 6 to 12 months to treat the disease. A person with TB may feel better before the treatment is finished. Adherence—taking all TB medicine as prescribed until finished—is important to curing TB. If

