

Step 4: Know that Your Confidentiality is Important to Us

It is natural to feel afraid or embarrassed about providing information about your contacts to medical staff.

At the TB Control Unit, we are committed to doing all that we can to protect your privacy:

- Your name will not be mentioned during the contact tracing process
- In certain special circumstances where your identity may be released, only relevant personnel will be informed. They will also be reminded of the need for confidentiality.

Do not let this stop you from doing what is right to stop transmission of the bacteria in the community you live in.

You can help to make Singapore a safer and healthier place for our loved ones to live in.

Step 5: Share What You Know

Share your knowledge and experience with close friends and family so that they too can help to support you on your road to better health!

Step 6: Clarify Your Doubts

The staff at the TB Control Unit are here to help you understand the contact tracing process better.

Our contact details are stated overleaf.



Tuberculosis Control Unit

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Contact:

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Office Hours:

Mon – Fri: 8 am – 1 pm; 2 pm – 5 pm

Sat: 8 am – 12 noon

TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL UNIT

Information for the Active TB Patient: Protect Your Family and Friends



How to Protect Your Family and Friends from Tuberculosis?



You have just been diagnosed with active tuberculosis (TB).

At this point, you may feel:

- Shocked at the diagnosis and anxious about your own treatment
- Worried about spreading TB to people around you

It is normal to feel this way. Many patients have shared similar fears and concerns with us.

At the TB Control Unit, we not only want to ensure that you are well-treated and cured of TB; we also want to protect your close family and friends from developing this disease. This process is referred to as contact tracing.

Read on to find out how you can help to stop the spread of TB to people around you.

Step 1: Know how TB is Spread

TB bacteria is spread in the air when you cough, sneeze or talk. Anyone in recent close contact with you before you were started on TB medication can be infected with TB bacteria. TB is not spread through sharing of utensils, food or towels.

The best way you can help to minimise the spread of TB is by being adherent to your TB treatment under Directly Observed Therapy. This decreases the amount of TB bacteria in your body so that less bacteria is present to spread disease.

Step 2: Know the Stages of TB

Not everyone exposed to you will be infected, as their immune systems may be able to fight the bacteria.

Among those who do get infected, most will feel well because the body's defences are able to build a wall around the bacteria, preventing them from causing diseases.

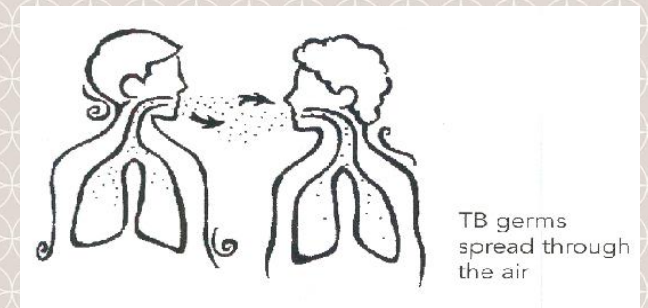
This is the **latent stage** of TB. At this stage:

- TB bacteria is asleep (dormant) in the body.
- These persons will not feel unwell.
- TB bacteria will not be passed to others.
- The bacteria is still alive and can become active later, especially in diabetics, persons with weakened immunity or kidney failure and smokers. Medication is available to kill the bacteria before they become active.

Some people may also already have the active form of TB at the time of screening. These patients need to start on TB medication immediately.

In the **active stage** of TB:

- TB bacteria is active and multiply quickly
- These persons may exhibit TB symptoms (cough, loss of appetite and weight, fever, night sweats)
- TB bacteria can be spread to others in close contact with these persons.



Step 3: Know how You can Help

When asked by medical staff, give accurate information about your symptoms and the duration for which you were unwell. This helps us to determine the period during which you may have spread TB bacteria to people around you.

Share with us the following:

- Who do you live with? Are there regular visitors to your home?
- With whom and where do you work or go to school?
- Are there friends or family members that you meet regularly?
- Do you meet up with others who share the same hobbies/ religious faith as you?