

Tuberculosis

TB Infection

A person with TB infection (Latent TB) is not sick with the disease and is not able to pass the infection to other people.

What is TB infection?

A person with TB infection has breathed TB bacteria into his/her lungs. Sometimes the immune system is able to kill the TB bacteria. If the person's immune system is unable to kill the bacteria, then this person has TB infection. A person with TB infection does not feel sick and cannot spread TB to others. However, they may progress to TB disease in the future, especially if their immune system weakens. Treatment of TB infection can prevent TB disease.

Adults with TB infection have about a 10% chance of developing TB disease during their lifetime. If their immune system is weakened (serious illness, diabetes, poor eating habits, heavy drinking), the TB bacteria may become active and cause TB disease. People with both TB and HIV infection have a much greater chance of developing TB disease.

How do I know if I have TB infection?

People with TB infection do not feel sick and may not know they have been exposed to TB. Having a TB skin test is the best way to find if you have been infected.

Public Health Agency of Canada <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/tbpc-latb/index.html>

Source: Health Canada July 2005