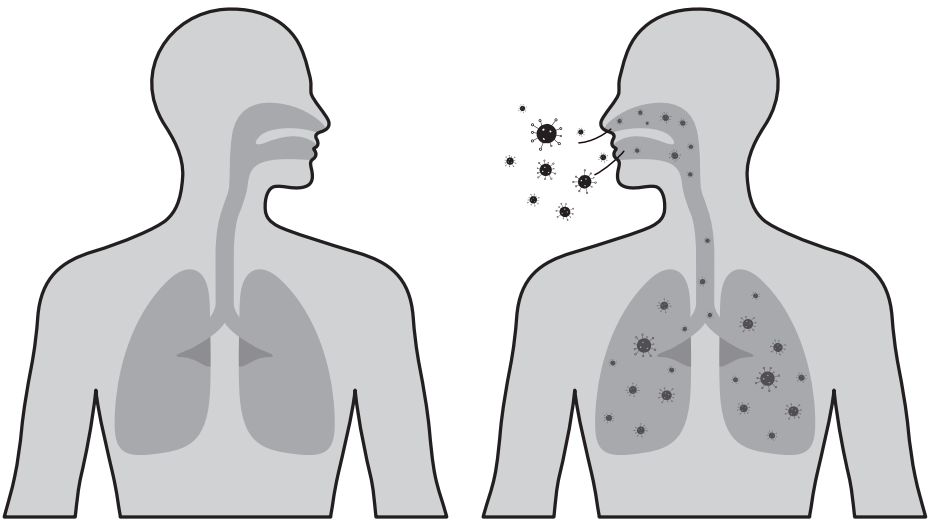


# Tuberculosis – What is TB?



## **Tuberculosis – What is TB?**

TB (tuberculosis), is an infectious disease which usually affects the lungs but can affect almost any part of the body.

TB is a bacteria, (germ). There are many types of TB. The infectious type is called Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Complex, (MTB).

TB is NOT easily caught – you have to have been in prolonged close contact with someone who is infectious.

TB is a serious illness but can be treated and cured.

Treatment involves antibiotics taken for at least 6 months but may require 9 / 12 months or longer.

## **What are the common symptoms of active TB?**

- Cough – which last for more than three weeks
- Sputum (phlegm) - occasionally with blood
- Weight loss – no obvious reason
- Loss of appetite
- Fever and sweating at night
- Extreme tiredness

When TB is present, out with the lungs, symptoms can include:

- Pain and swelling around the infected area

In rare cases of TB meningitis

- headache / vomiting/ confusion/ intolerance to light (photophobia) can occur.

## **How Do You Get TB?**

- TB can only be passed on if the person has TB in the throat or lungs.
- Not everyone with TB in the lungs is an infection risk

- TB is spread through the air and breathed in when the infected person coughs / sneezes.
- This only happens with direct, close prolonged contact.

Once on the correct tolerated treatment, the person with TB will quickly become non-infectious, generally after two weeks.

In Glasgow, the TB nurse will collect information and arrange TB testing for individuals identified as a close contact.

## **Who is a Close Contact ?**

- Contacts who live in the same household or stay overnight
- Babies / Children / Elderly contacts
- Contacts who have underlying health conditions
- Contacts who have weakened immune systems
- HIV/ Radio therapy / Chemo therapy / Immune altering medication
- Alcohol/ drug dependence
- Lived /worked/prolonged travel to countries with large numbers of TB

## **What happens if I am a TB contact in Glasgow?**

The TB nurse will identify contacts who require screening

If well, screening takes place between 6 - 8 weeks.

If you have symptoms, you will be screened earlier.

Tests carried out will depend on your age-

Over 16yrs – 65yrs = TB blood test

Over 65yrs Chest x ray

Under 16 yrs = Tuberculin skin test +/- x ray + blood test

## **Contacts who have no symptoms cannot pass TB onto others**

- You can continue to attend school / college / work as usual.
- Generally TB does not survive out with the body for a prolonged time and less so in well ventilated, well-lit areas.

## **TB CANNOT be spread by sharing the same cups / cutlery / bedlinen / towels.**

BCG vaccination may be offered to unvaccinated close contacts of infectious cases who are under 16 yrs.

## **Treatment of active TB**

- Combination of four antibiotics are used initially
- Antibiotics usually given in tablet form for a minimum of six months but may need to be extended to 9 or 12 months.
- Most people can take their TB treatment at home
- Occasionally may require admission to hospital for a short time.

Each TB patient in Glasgow will have a TB nurse to support them throughout their course of treatment.

Contact details for the TB nurses is available on the back page.

## Notes

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## Appointment Details

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Please do not hesitate to contact your local TB nurse for advice/support.

**TB Nurse Specialist: GG+C**

**New Victoria Infirmary – South Glasgow**

Gayle Haran (Tues- Thurs) 8am - 4pm

**☎ 0141 347 8846**

**Queen Elizabeth University Hospital – South Glasgow**

Lesley Ritchie (Mon–Thurs) 8am–4pm

**☎ 0141 451 5862**

**Gartnavel General Hospital – West Glasgow**

Catriona Paterson (Mon–Wed) 8am–4pm

**☎ 0141 232 2161**

**Glasgow Royal Infirmary – North + East**

Una Lees / Ellen McGeough

(Mon–Fri) 9am–6pm (4:30 Fri)

**☎ 0141 201 3900**

**For Further information**

**🌐 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tuberculosis-tb/symptoms/>**