

Appendix 23: Diabetes and Tuberculosis

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis is caused by bacterial germs called- Mycobacterium Tuberculosis. An infected person with TB disease can spread the germs into the air by coughing or sneezing and anyone sharing the same air space can breathe the germs in. Sputum collection and chest x-rays are tests done to diagnose TB disease.



Symptoms of TB can include:

Cough
Night Sweat
Loss of Appetite
Weight Loss
Fatigue
Fever

What is Latent TB Infection?

If you breathe in the TB germ you can have latent TB infection or it can progress to Active TB disease. When one has latent TB infection they are not contagious. The TB germs are dormant or asleep. People are diagnosed with latent TB infection with a positive TB Skin Test. There is a risk of latent TB infection to progress to Active TB disease. This means that the TB germs may wake up and start to grow and multiply.



Treatment for TB and Latent TB Infection

For TB disease, antibiotics are taken for 6 months. For latent TB infection, antibiotics are taken for about 9 months. When one completes their treatment for TB disease they are cured. Treatment for latent TB infection prevents the germ from becoming active.

How can you prevent Tuberculosis in your community?

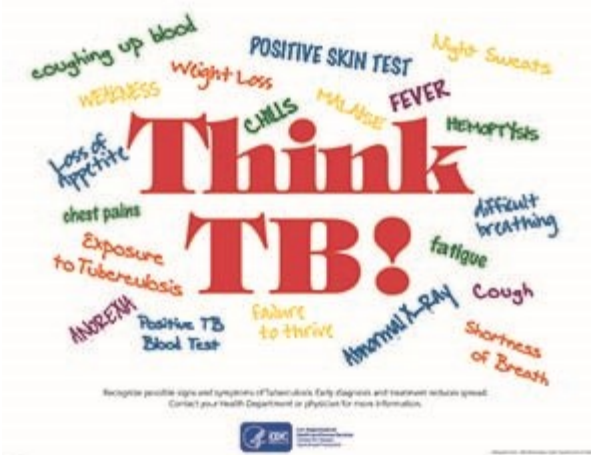
- Educate community members on the symptoms of TB.
- Encourage community members to go to their health care facility when they are sick to be assessed and tested for TB.
- Avoid risk factors that compromise your immune system such as excessive smoking and alcohol use and practicing unsafe sex.
- When diagnosed make sure you complete your treatment for latent TB infection and TB disease.

If you have diabetes what can you do to prevent TB Disease?

- Evidence shows that diabetes triples the risk of developing TB. When a chronic illness such as diabetes compromises ones immune system it places them at a greater risk in contracting TB.
- Understand the symptoms of TB. Get tested if you have any TB symptoms.
- Keep your immune system strong and healthy- eat well and exercise.
- Manage your glucose well. When your glucose is not managed well it places your body at greater risk for germs such as TB.
- It is important to make healthy lifestyle choices- such as reduction in smoking and excessive alcohol consumption and encouraging safe sex practices. The less risk factors those living with diabetes have, the less chance the TB germ will invade your body.
- You can request a TB Skin Test to know your status with latent TB infection. It would be strongly recommended for someone living with diabetes with a positive TB Skin Test to take treatment for latent TB infection.

What someone living with diabetes should know about Tuberculosis

- Both diabetes and TB share similar symptoms- fatigue, loss of appetite, weight loss.
- Tuberculosis also depresses your immune system and places you at greater risk for other infections.
- Clients with diabetes and TB take a longer time to respond to anti-TB treatment.
- For those living with diabetes and on treatment for TB or latent TB infection it is important to manage your glucose well. Clients with poor glycemic control can cause a negative effect on TB treatment.



Be Tested

Be Treated

Be Cured

“Collaborative Framework for the Care and Control of Tuberculosis and Diabetes”,
World Health Organization and International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung
Disease.

“Diabetes and Tuberculosis: a review of the role of optimal glycemic control”- this article
reviews the association between diabetes and tuberculosis and suggests appropriate
management for these conditions.