

LATENT TUBERCULOSIS INFECTION

What is latent TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and spreads through the air from person to person.

In some people, TB bacteria can live in the body without causing the individual to become ill and without the individual being contagious — this is called latent TB infection (LTBI).

In people with LTBI, the body is able to fight the bacteria to stop them from multiplying and the individual does not experience symptoms of disease for months, years or even a lifetime.

However, people with LTBI may develop the disease later in life if they do not receive the appropriate treatment to prevent active TB disease. Receiving the appropriate tests from a medical provider is the only method to detect infection.

What is the difference between latent TB infection and active TB disease?

In someone with latent **TB infection (LTBI)**, the bacteria are not causing illness and the individual will not feel symptoms. People with LTBI cannot transmit the TB bacteria to others. To greatly reduce the risk of developing active TB disease in the future, short-course prophylactic treatment is available for those with LTBI.

Someone with **active TB disease** will often have severe symptoms and they may transmit the bacteria to other people through coughing, speaking, sneezing or singing. There is treatment for both LTBI and active TB disease, but for those with TB disease, the treatment is longer and requires more medication.

What does LTBI look like?

- ▶ No symptoms of TB
- ▶ Blood tests (IGRA) or skin test (TST) will have a positive result but chest x-ray will be normal or not consistent with active TB
- ▶ Cannot spread TB bacteria to others

Why take medication for LTBI?

- ▶ A person with LTBI can have TB bacteria in their body for years before progressing to active TB disease and developing symptoms
- ▶ Taking anti-TB medication is the only way to kill these TB bacteria
- ▶ When taken appropriately, anti-TB medication for LTBI can prevent you from developing TB disease in the future

What are my options?

- ▶ There are several treatment options available for LTBI that can prevent progression to active TB disease
- ▶ Some regimens are as short as 3 or 4 months — ask your provider about 3HP or 4R
- ▶ 3HP is a short-course regimen of 12 weeks of medication, only taken once a week and can prevent progression to active TB disease when taken appropriately