



UK Health  
Security  
Agency



# About your treatment for latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI)





## What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infection caused by bacteria. When a person with TB in their lungs or throat coughs or sneezes, they send TB bacteria into the air. If you breathe in these bacteria, one of three things will happen:

- your body kills off the TB bacteria so they cannot harm you now or in the future
- the TB bacteria make you ill – this is called active TB disease
- the TB bacteria remain in your body but are not active – this is called latent TB infection.

## About active TB disease

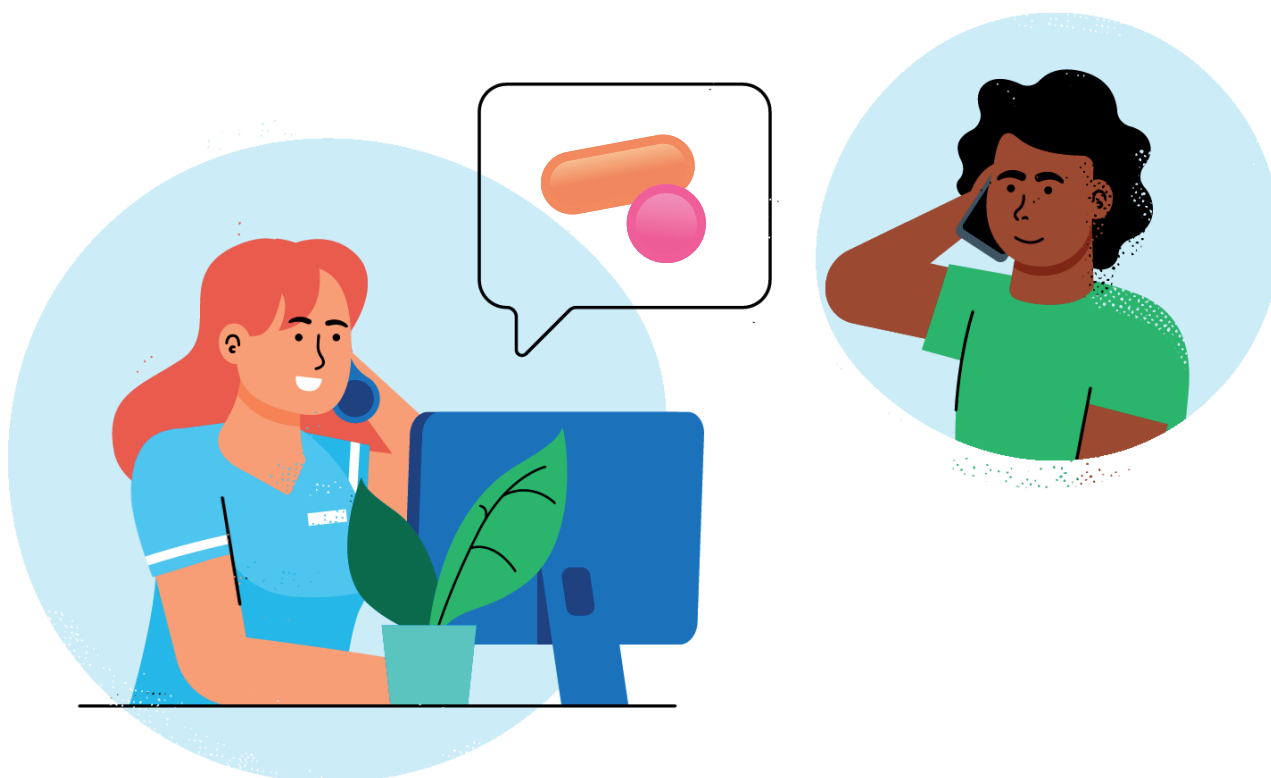
When people talk about TB, they usually mean 'active TB'. If you have active TB, the bacteria are making you ill and you could pass TB on to other people. Active TB can be very harmful to your health, but it can be cured with a course of antibiotic TB medicine.

## About latent TB infection

If you have latent TB infection, the TB bacteria in your body are not active. You are not ill, and you cannot pass TB on to others. However, 1 in 10 people with latent TB infection will go on to become ill with active TB disease. The good news is that latent TB infection can be treated to stop the TB bacteria from becoming active.

## How do I know I have latent TB infection?

If you have latent TB infection, you will not feel ill. The only way to know if you have latent TB infection is to have a TB blood test or TB skin test. If you have latent TB infection, a course of antibiotic TB medicine can kill the bacteria before they have a chance to become active and make you ill.



## Will I develop active TB disease?

Some people may be more likely to get active TB disease than others, such as people with a weakened immune system. It is possible to become ill with active TB disease many years after you breathe in TB bacteria. That is why it is a good idea to put your mind at ease by taking the treatment for latent TB infection while you are healthy and before the bacteria becomes active.

## What treatment do I need for latent TB infection?

A course of antibiotic TB medicine will treat latent TB infection. You may be given *Rifampicin* and *Isoniazid* for three months (which is likely to be together in a tablet called *Rifinah*), or *Isoniazid* by itself for six months, or *Rifampicin* by itself for 4 months. Someone from your TB team will talk through the treatment with you and answer any questions you may have. They will ask you about any other medicine you may be taking. It is important to tell them about all medication you are taking, including any prescribed by your doctor, medicines for birth control, and any over the counter medicines or herbal medicines that you have bought. **Birth control may not work while you are taking TB antibiotic medicine and for 28 days after stopping the treatment.**

## What do I need to know about latent TB infection treatment?

Take your antibiotic TB medicine every day. The best chance for this treatment to work is to take all the medicine as prescribed. Some people have found the tips below useful in helping them to remember to take their TB medicine every day.




- take your tablets at the same time each day
- as you take your tablets, tick days off on the treatment diary in this leaflet
- always keep your tablets in the same place
- set an alarm on your phone to remind you to take your tablets
- ask a family member or friend to remind you to take your tablets every day
- use a weekly dispenser (a dosette box).

Try to take your antibiotic TB medicine at least **30 minutes before you eat food or two hours afterwards**. There are certain foods you may need to avoid, please ask your TB team so that they can advise you.

Your liver will be working harder than usual whilst taking your antibiotic TB medicine. For some people, drinking alcohol during your treatment may cause harm to your liver. **If you drink alcohol, you should discuss the amount you drink with your TB team so that they can advise you.**

As with all medicines, there may be side effects. Some are mild, while others may be more serious. Depending on the treatment you receive, you may experience the following side effects. **If you experience any of these side effects or are worried about anything else, please tell your TB team about them as they can help you.**

## Common Side Effects

	<b>Rifinah</b> 300mg/150mg 150mg/100mg 	<b>Rifampicin</b> 300mg 150mg 	<b>Isoniazid</b> 100mg 
Orange staining to tears (may stain contact lenses), saliva, urine and other bodily fluids – <b>this is not harmful</b>	✓	✓	
Stomach upset such as nausea (feeling sick), vomiting and diarrhoea	✓	✓	✓
Flu-like symptoms such as chills, fever, dizziness and joint pains	✓	✓	
Skin rashes and itchiness	✓	✓	✓
Tingling and numbness in toes and/or fingers	✓		✓
Menstrual disturbances	✓	✓	
Birth control (oral pill, implants or emergency contraception) is reduced – <b>other methods of birth control should be used</b>	✓	✓	

## Important side effects

*Rifinah*, *Rifampicin* and *Isoniazid* may rarely cause jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes). **If you notice either of these side effects, stop taking your TB medicine and get medical attention immediately.**

*Rifinah*, *Rifampicin* and *Isoniazid* can cause skin rashes or itching which usually disappear on their own. Very rarely the skin, and possibly the lips and inside the mouth may become red and start peeling. **If you notice this, stop taking your TB medicine and get medical attention immediately.**

Nausea (feeling sick) is a common side effect to *Rifinah*, *Rifampicin* and *Isoniazid*. However, if you are vomiting (being sick) your TB medicine may not work as well. **If you are vomiting or have an upset stomach, please inform your TB team immediately.**

Attending all your clinic check-ups and keeping in touch with your TB team is very important. Let them know if you develop any side effects, are worried about anything else, miss any of your TB medicine or need help to remember to take your treatment. They are there to help you.

## When I finish treatment, will I be free of TB forever?

There is always a chance you could breathe in TB bacteria again in the future. The chance of this is low for most people but it is useful to know the most common symptoms of active TB disease and see your family doctor if you have any of them.

- a cough lasting three weeks or longer
- fever (a high temperature)
- sweating at night so much that you need to change your bed sheets
- losing weight for no reason
- not wanting to eat
- tiredness for no reason
- failure to grow, gain weight or swollen glands in children.

## Where can I get advice and support?

Your named person to contact from the TB team is:

Telephone/mobile:

Your hospital doctor is:

## Where can I get more information?

### TB Alert

The UK's national tuberculosis charity. Providing TB information, support and advocacy in the UK and worldwide.

[www.thetruthabouttb.org](http://www.thetruthabouttb.org)

[www.tbalert.org](http://www.tbalert.org)

You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Enter 'Tuberculosis' in the search box

## Treatment Diary



Ask your TB team to highlight the dates you will be on antibiotic TB medicine. You can then tick off each day as you take your medication. You can also write in the time of your clinic check-ups.

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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