

Tuberculosis is a contagious bacterial infection that begins in the lungs and can pass to any organ in the body. While it primarily is restricted to the lungs, it can affect the kidneys, bone, spinal cord and the brain, traveling by lymph nodes and the blood stream. It is spread by droplets through sneezing, coughing, and even laughing. You can have Tb and not even know it. It lies dormant and is inactive or latent but becomes active by stress and a compromised/ weakened immune system. Symptoms of Tb are productive cough for three weeks or more possibly accompanied with blood. You can have a poor appetite, fever and chills, weight loss, body aches fatigue, night sweats, and swollen lymph nodes. A simple intra dermal injection is the primary test for DETECTION OF EXPOSURE of Tb. Once placed, a return trip to the clinic is made to evaluate the site 24-48 hours after placement. There are three different categories. If the induration is greater than or equal to 5mm and you have a compromised immune system. Equal to 10mm and you are a healthcare worker. Equal to 15mm and you don't have any risk factors. However, a positive Tb test does not mean you have Tb. It means you have a possible exposure to Tb. The healthcare worker will then order either a chest X-ray or a sputum sample. Only then will you be diagnosed with Tb. There is treatment for Tb which is long term antibiotic therapy. Multiple antibiotics given at the same time with a course of 4, 6 or 9 months depending on the regimen. It is very important that the treatment is strictly followed to prevent antibiotic resistance.