

SAMHS INFO BULLETIN

Compiled by Corporate Communication



TB AWARENESS MONTH

Tuberculosis causes more deaths in South Africa than any infectious disease. It is a serious problem all over the world. Between 6 and 10 million people are infected by the TB germ. It is infectious, so it can be passed on from one person to the other.

TB is spread through the air. Germs go into the air when someone who has TB coughs spits or even sneezes and the other person inhales the air. That is why TB can be spread very easily in overcrowded places. The TB germ is inhaled into the body and attacks the lungs which causes holes and other damages in the lungs. It can also be spread through the blood to other parts of the body like the brain, spinal cord, kidneys, intestines, eyes, covering of the heart, bones & joints, stomach etc.

Some people believe that you can only get TB if you are poor or if you are an alcoholic. This is not true. Anyone can get TB. Not everyone who has TB germs gets sick. It depends on how well your body can fight off disease.

You will probably have some of the following signs and symptom if you have TB:

- Coughing for more than two weeks
- Coughing up blood
- Lack of appetite
- Feeling pains in the chest
- Losing weight
- Becoming short of breath
- Sweating at night
- Getting a fever which comes and goes.

The following people are at higher risk for active TB:

- Infants
- Elderly
- People with weakened immune systems, for, example due to AIDS, chemotherapy, diabetes, or certain medications.

Prevention

- Exercise helps in building immunity.
- Moderate (healthy levels of) alcohol consumption and no smoking.
- Healthy hygiene habits plays a vital role in prevention.
- Balanced diet- a meal should include pulses, legumes, seasonal fruits, green and fresh vegetables.

The treatment for Tuberculosis is a six month cycle. All you need to do is consult a medical expert. If you have symptoms, consult your doctor.