

Treating active tuberculosis (TB) disease

Information for the community

If you have been told you have tuberculosis (TB), it is okay to feel worried, but you will get help. Your doctors will talk to you about what you need to do and will give you medications to get rid of TB.

The tuberculosis (TB) bacteria or germ moves slowly, not quickly like the COVID or flu viruses. This means it doesn't spread around the community so easily or so fast.

It also means the germ is slow to leave your body, so treatment for active TB takes a long time – you will need to take medications for six months or more.

Medications

If you have active TB, your doctor will give you a mix of antibiotics (medications) to take every day for six months or more, which your doctor will explain to you.

Your health worker might ask you to come into the clinic to take your medications or visit you at home. This is to make sure you are doing okay and to answer any questions you may have.

Can I stop taking my medication if I feel better?

No, you shouldn't stop taking your medication without speaking with your doctor or nurse. It's very important that you take all the medications your doctor or nurse asks you to, every day or as often as they tell you to, for as long as they say.

If you stop taking your medicine, you can get very sick and this can make other people sick too. The TB germ can even start to change so that the medications stop working for you and others.

If you know someone getting treatment for TB, please support them. Make sure they are doing okay and make sure they finish their medications every day. If you are worried, contact the clinic.

Going to hospital

Most people can do their treatment at home.

Occasionally, some people may need to spend time in hospital if they are very unwell and need extra medical support. When they are better, they can finish their treatment at home.

For more information:

Royal Adelaide Hospital, SA TB Services
Telephone: (08) 7074 1089 (business hours)
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

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