

Tuberculosis Preventive Therapy

What is tuberculosis (TB) infection?

TB infection (also known as latent TB infection or 'sleeping' TB) is when you have TB germs in your body, but they are not making you sick. Your body's immune system is stopping the germs causing any damage. There are no symptoms with TB infection and the germs cannot be passed to other people.

TB infection is different from TB disease which is when TB germs wake up or increase in number and make you sick and you are able to pass the germs on to other people.

What is Tuberculosis Preventive Therapy (TPT)?

TPT are special antibiotics for TB infection. There are different types of antibiotics – your doctor will decide which one is best for you. The length of time they need to be taken is different for everyone, but they are taken for several months. NSW Health provides TPT free of charge regardless of visa or Medicare status.

Will TPT stop TB disease?

TPT can reduce the risk of TB disease by 90% if you take all of the medicine your doctor prescribes. It is still possible to get re-infected with TB germs. This could happen if you travel to country with a lot of TB or are around someone with TB. There is no way to be tested to see if the medicine has worked. The only way to know is by taking all of the medicine as your doctor prescribes.

Why should I take TPT when I don't feel sick?

TPT is the best way to protect yourself against TB disease. If the doctor has offered TPT, it is because you are at risk of TB disease. TPT stops the TB germs from making you sick before you get sick. It prevents you from getting sick and spreading the disease to your family and community.

Will the medicine make me sick?

Side effects to TPT are not common. You may be asked to have a blood test to check everything is okay. The doctor and nurse will talk to you about possible side effects before you start any medication.

Further information

For more information visit [Tuberculosis \(TB\) fact sheets](#).

For free help in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.