



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

Latent TB Infection

Questions and Answers for Clients

People with latent TB infection often have questions about their care and treatment. Here are some common questions and answers that may help you learn more about what to expect:

Q: I've been told I have latent TB infection. What can I expect now?

Once you are told you have latent TB infection, you will receive different handouts from your nurse. These handouts will help you to better understand TB and the medications you will take to help prevent getting sick with TB disease. When you have latent TB infection, you cannot spread TB to other people.

Q: What is the treatment for latent TB infection?

There are three options available: Isoniazid every day for 9 months, Rifampin every day for 4 months or Isoniazid and Rifapentine every week for 3 months. Depending on your health and other medications you may take, one option may be better for you than others. Your doctor will talk with you about which option(s) is/are best for you. Your nurse will check on how things are going and your doctor may make changes as needed.

Q: Why do I need to take TB medications for so long?

TB germs are very strong and it takes time to kill the TB germ. It is important to let your doctor and nurse know right away if you feel unwell or if you stop taking your medication as asked by them.

Q: How often do I need to come to the clinic?

This depends on what medicine you are taking and how well you are doing:

Isoniazid: once a month in the beginning, then every two months if there are no problems. If you are doing well, your last appointment may be by telephone.

Rifampin: once a month

Isoniazid and Rifapentine: once a week

Q: Who will I see during these clinic visits?

We have a great team of people that will help you including nurses, doctors and sometimes pharmacists. Our goal is to help you prevent getting sick with TB and to stay healthy while you are taking TB medication.

Q: What happens during these clinic visits?

We will ask how you are feeling, ask about any new medications that you may have started, ask if you are having any side effects, review your TB medications with you and make sure you are doing well. You will also be asked to get some blood tests done. This is important as it gives us information on how your body is coping with the medicines.

These clinic visits are a great time for you to ask any questions you may have! You can use the lines below to help keep track of any questions you may have:

Q: How long are these clinic visits?

The first clinic visit can take up to 1 hour. The rest of the visits are usually shorter and last about 15 minutes if things are going well.

Q: When is my treatment completed so that I no longer have to come to the clinic?

Your nurse will let you know when your treatment will finish. Usually it is best to take all the medicines given to you, even if it takes a bit longer than the time frame you were told in the beginning. You may be asked to have a chest x-ray when you are finished your medicines. Most people do not need to come back to the clinic once the medicines are finished.