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What Does it Mean to Have Active Tuberculosis?



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- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a germ called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (*M. tuberculosis* for short).
- Infection occurs when a person breathes in the *M. tuberculosis* germ which another person with the disease coughs into the air.
- Not all people infected will go on to develop active TB.
- Infection with *M. tuberculosis* occurs without any symptoms and requires a test to detect it.
- When the *M. tuberculosis* germ becomes active it can produce disease and poor health.
- The body can kill the *M. tuberculosis* germ or the germ can remain sleeping and become active at a future date. There is no reliable way of predicting which event will occur in an individual infected by the *M. tuberculosis* germ.
- The most common places in the body of the *M. tuberculosis* germ becomes active is in the:
 - lungs
 - glands in the neck

- Other less common places that the *M. tuberculosis* germ can become active is in:
 - bones and joints
 - kidney
 - head
 - intestines
- If the *M. tuberculosis* germ become active most people will experience symptoms.
- All of the symptoms caused by *M. tuberculosis* can be caused by disorders other than tuberculosis. This is why it is important to discuss your symptoms with your doctor.
- Common symptoms of tuberculosis include:
 - cough
 - fever
 - night sweats
 - loss of appetite
 - weight loss
 - tired, fatigue

- Symptoms that occur then there is active disease in a particular part of the body:

Body location of active disease	Symptoms that can occur
lungs	cough, sputum, coughing up blood
glands of the neck	lumps in neck
bones	pain in the bones or back
joints	pain, redness, swelling
kidney	very few symptoms
head	headaches, stiff neck, hurts to move head, hurts to move eyes
heart	hard to catch your breath; may have chest pain
intestines	very few symptoms; may get stomach pain and change in bowel movements