

Tablets for latent tuberculosis infection

Public health information

Tests showed that you have been exposed to tuberculosis at some time in your life. The tuberculosis (TB) germs are inactive, sleeping or dormant in your body. The germs are probably not affecting you now. However, there is a small chance that these germs could become active at some stage. When TB germs become active, they cause TB disease with symptoms such as cough, fever, sweats, loss of appetite, tiredness or weight loss.

You have been advised to start a course of treatment for latent tuberculosis infection. The most commonly used antibiotic is called Isoniazid, and taking this will reduce the chance of you becoming sick with tuberculosis disease.

Note

- you do not have tuberculosis disease
- you are not sick or infectious
- you cannot spread the germs to anyone else.

Even though you are not sick you need to take your tablets **daily** for six to nine months. If you miss too many days, the medicine might not work and you won't be protected from developing disease. It is important to continue the treatment for the entire time recommended by your doctor to make sure that you are treated adequately.

Make sure you always have enough tablets. The medication is free of charge and if you are seen by a doctor at a public hospital, the consultation is bulk billed.

If you have any problems with side effects it is important to let your doctor know. Some of the more common side effects include: skin rashes or fever, pins and needles in hands and feet. Sometimes liver problems may occur which can result in nausea, vomiting, dark urine and yellow skin and eyes, however this is very rare. If this occurs you should stop taking the tablets and contact the doctor immediately. Your doctor may also order blood tests from time to time. You should avoid drinking alcohol while taking these tablets, as it can affect your liver.

Some ways to help you remember to take your medicine:

- keep tablets in a place where you will see them every day, but out of reach of children and out of the sun
- ask a partner, relative or friend to remind you daily
- use a dosette or pill reminder box, these are available at pharmacies
- take tablets at the same time every day, for example, before breakfast, before bed or when you brush your teeth
- set a reminder or alarm on your mobile phone
- make a note of any missed doses and report this to your doctor on your next visit.

Do not split the dose of tablets: take all the tablets together at one time.

If you forget to take your medicine at the normal time, take it as soon as you remember, and then continue the next day as normal. If you forget to take your tablets for the whole day, just take your normal dose the next day, do not take a double dose.

Remember

- you cannot pass on the infection to others.
- you must take your tablets **every day**
- taking a course of tablets will reduce your risk of the TB germs becoming active and you getting sick with TB disease
- you will have regular check-ups at the specialist clinic at the hospital.

For further information contact the TB Control Section on 1300 651 160.