

13. What if I have HIV infection? How does it affect my Tuberculosis?

- HIV increases the risk of acquiring active Tuberculosis disease since it significantly lowers the patient's immunity especially in HIV infected individuals not adhering to the HIV medicines. However both HIV and Tuberculosis have medicines you can take and live healthy if you make sure you complete the medicines.

14. What treatment is available for adolescents already infected with Tuberculosis (Latent Tuberculosis)?

- Infected adolescents without active Tuberculosis disease can be offered free medicines for prevention of active Tuberculosis after screening and ensuring that he/she does not have active Tuberculosis.

15. What treatment is available for adolescents with active Tuberculosis (Tuberculosis disease)?

- Highly effective and safe medicines are available in most Government hospitals in Nigeria for treatment of adolescents with Tuberculosis. These medicines are offered for free.

16. What should I do if I am pregnant and have Tuberculosis?

- Don't be afraid. Medicines for treating Tuberculosis are safe in pregnancy.

17. Can a lactating mother receiving anti-Tuberculosis treatment breastfeed her baby?

- Lactating mothers receiving anti-Tuberculosis treatment can breastfeed her baby as the medicines will not cause any harm to the baby.

18. What is Directly Observed Therapy (DOT)?

- DOT is a strategy that implies that the patient swallows the medicines daily at the right time without interruption under the supervision of the healthcare worker or treatment supporter.

19. How can I remember to take my Tuberculosis medicines if I am not on DOT?

- It is advisable to be on DOT.
- Your treatment supporter who is either a household member or healthcare workers would help you remember to take your Tuberculosis medicines daily.

20. What are the side effects of Tuberculosis medicines?

- Tuberculosis medicines are relatively safe with little or no side effects. When you commence medication your DOT provider would provide the general information required for your treatment. If you have any concerns kindly return to your DOT provider.

21. Is Tuberculosis curable?

- Yes. The available medicines are very effective and will cure the patient if he/she does not interrupt the treatment.

Laboratory testing and treatment for Tuberculosis is free across all government hospitals in Nigeria.

For more information:

Call **3340** for free or dial ***3340#**



Federal Ministry of Health

Department of Public Health

National Tuberculosis, Leprosy and
Buruli Ulcer Control Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

**about Tuberculosis in
Adolescents**

1. What causes Tuberculosis?

- Tuberculosis is caused by a germ called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, a type of bacteria.

2. How does Tuberculosis spread?

- Individuals acquire Tuberculosis germs from adolescents or adults suffering from Tuberculosis disease affecting the lungs (pulmonary Tuberculosis) during coughing, sneezing, singing, talking and spitting. This leads to release of small droplets from the person's infected lungs into the air. An individual within the area may inhale these droplets containing the Tuberculosis germs. If the inhaled germs reach the inner part of the lungs, they may cause infection of the lung tissue. This can occur within the household or in any setting where people gather in a confined space such as a classroom or a hostel.
- Tuberculosis infection can progress to active disease when the immune system (body defense mechanisms) of the individual becomes compromised especially in people living with HIV or those that are malnourished.

3. What group of individuals can transmit Tuberculosis?

- Parents, grandparents, older sibling(s), maids, fellow adolescents and peers, teachers, drivers or caregivers with undiagnosed, untreated or poorly treated disease can transmit Tuberculosis.

4. Can I get Tuberculosis from sharing food, drinking from same cup or kissing someone infected with Tuberculosis?

- No. Sharing food, drinks or kissing are not means of transmitting Tuberculosis. However, occasionally when infected persons cough, large droplets containing Tuberculosis germs may drop on food items close to them and Tuberculosis germs can be ingested by other people who could acquire Tuberculosis infection in the gut. Tuberculosis germs can also be transmitted from consumption of unpasteurized cow milk, leading to infection in the gut.

5. What is the difference between Tuberculosis infection and Tuberculosis disease?

- Tuberculosis infection (also termed Latent Tuberculosis) is when an individual inhales the germ but does not have visible symptoms or signs of the disease because his body is able to keep it under control at that point in time. This condition can be detected through simple laboratory tests.
- Tuberculosis disease (also termed active Tuberculosis) is a situation where the individual has obvious symptoms & signs of the disease after the germs inhaled has invaded the body leading to tissue injury (also called chronic inflammation), especially if the immune system has become weak.
- Tuberculosis disease is confirmed through some special test of the sputum and other specimen, and X-ray in some cases.

6. What are the symptoms and signs of Tuberculosis?

The symptoms and signs of Tuberculosis include:

- Cough for 2 weeks or more
- Prolonged fever for 2 weeks or more
- Weight loss or failure to gain weight
- Any person that has history of contact (lives) with an adult known to have active Tuberculosis and shows the above listed symptoms/signs.

7. Are adolescents at increased risk of contracting Tuberculosis disease?

- Adolescents have an increased risk of contracting Tuberculosis especially if he/she has other co-infection like HIV or is malnourished and exposed to an adult that has active untreated Tuberculosis.

8. Are there types of Tuberculosis adolescents are more susceptible to?

- Tuberculosis primarily affects the lungs. However, other parts of the body including the lymph nodes, abdomen, spine, brain, heart, bone, skin, kidney and genital organs can also be affected.
- Tuberculosis of the lungs is the commonest form of Tuberculosis in adolescents.

9. How can Tuberculosis be prevented in adolescents?

- There is no specific Tuberculosis vaccine for adolescents. However, administration of Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine at birth can prevent development of severe forms of Tuberculosis in adolescents.
- Other forms of prevention include:
 - Use of medicines to prevent development of active Tuberculosis in adolescents infected with the germ but yet to develop the disease.
 - Infection control measures at homes, community and facility levels such as covering mouth while coughing, ensuring safe disposal of sputum (phlegm), ensuring good cross ventilation both at health facilities and homes and avoiding overcrowding.
 - General measures including early detection and prompt treatment of diagnosed Tuberculosis cases, good personal hygiene as well as maintaining good nutrition.

10. What is the importance of the BCG vaccine for children? Can it work for a lifetime once taken in childhood?

- BCG vaccine has variable effectiveness in preventing Tuberculosis. However, it is particularly useful for preventing severe forms of Tuberculosis e.g. Tuberculosis of the brain and blood-borne (disseminated) Tuberculosis.

11. Why is good personal hygiene important for Tuberculosis prevention?

- Good personal hygiene is one of the measures for preventing Tuberculosis as indiscriminate coughing, sneezing or spitting can spread the Tuberculosis germs to people and ultimately lead to disease.

12. How is Tuberculosis diagnosed?

- The first-line test for diagnosing Tuberculosis is the GeneXpert test that makes use of sputum and other body fluids or tissues. Results are made available after two hours of testing. Chest X-ray can also assist in making the diagnosis.