

PROGRESSION OF LATENT TUBERCULOSIS INFECTION TO TUBERCULOSIS DISEASE

When does Latent TB Infection Progress to TB Disease?

Some people with LTBI will develop active TB disease when their immune system is not strong enough to prevent the TB germs from growing and spreading.

Who is most At-Risk to Develop TB Disease?

People who have LTBI and have a weak immune system are more likely to get active TB disease. The elderly, babies and children less than five years old may have weaker immune systems.

The following conditions may also weaken or alter the immune system:

- HIV infection and AIDS
- diabetes
- severe kidney disease
- silicosis
- cancer
- organ transplants
- drugs and treatments that alter the immune system (e.g., glucocorticoids, some treatments for arthritis, crohn's disease and psoriasis)
- low body weight

Also more likely to get active TB disease are persons who:

- have old TB on their chest X-ray that was not treated or cured in the past
- have been infected with TB bacteria within the past two years
- smoke cigarettes

TB can be prevented, treated and cured.

Antibiotics that prevent and treat TB are provided free of charge to health care providers to give to their patients.