

ISONIAZID (INH) FACT SHEET

A patient's guide to taking medicine for Latent Tuberculosis (TB) Infection

What is Isoniazid (INH)?

Isoniazid (INH) is one of the antibiotic medicines used to *treat* Tuberculosis (TB). There are two ways it is used:

1. To ***treat*** Latent TB Infection (LTBI)
2. To ***treat*** active TB disease in combination with other TB medicines.



Why do I need to take this medicine?

Your doctor has ordered INH to treat your **Latent TB infection**. This is when the TB germ is inactive in your body.

Taking this medicine will reduce your risk of developing active TB disease in the future. You may need to take this medicine for 6 to 12 months. TB germs are very strong. INH slowly kills the germs that cause TB.

INH is available in both liquid (syrup) and pill form.

Why would I need to take Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) at the same time?

Vitamin B6 may help to prevent numbness and tingling in your fingers and toes that can be caused by INH. You may not need to take this vitamin if you are able to get enough as part of a healthy diet.

What are some of the side effects I should look for?

Most people have no problems taking INH.

You need to be monitored regularly by your doctor while taking INH. This may include blood tests to ensure your liver is healthy

If you have any of the following side effects, call your doctor immediately:

- Stomach cramping/pain
- Anorexia
- Fatigue/feeling very tired
- Fever for three days or more
- Nausea/vomiting
- Dark urine
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Skin rash
- Numbness or tingling feeling in the fingers or toes

In the event that you have any of the above listed side effects and cannot reach your doctor, you should STOP the medicine on your own and call your doctor as soon as possible.

Note: If INH has been stopped, alternative options are available. Talk to your doctor to see if these medicines are right for you.

Tips for taking your Latent TB medicine

- It is important to take this medicine every day. If you do not, some germs might stay in your body and make you sick.
- Take the medicine at the same time every day, for example, first thing in the morning or at bedtime.
- If you forget to take the medicine, take it as soon as you can that day. Never take doses at the one time.
- Try to take the medicine on an empty stomach (1 hour before food or 2 hours after food). If it hurts your stomach, take it with food.
- Remember to tell your doctor about other medicines you are taking or any new medicines that you start taking. Some medicines cannot be taken at the same time.
- DO NOT drink alcohol while taking this medicine. You could damage your liver.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or are planning to become pregnant.

- Before starting your medicine tell your doctor of any travel plans which may interrupt your treatment.
- Do not share your medicine with others.
- Call your doctor when you have a 3-week supply left to order the next supply.

Can I get active TB disease after I complete the INH treatment?

Yes, however, people who take the medicine every day significantly reduce their risk of developing active TB disease in the future.

You should be aware of the signs and symptoms of active TB disease and when to call your doctor.

Refer to the **STOP TB brochure** for signs and symptoms of active TB disease.

Remember to keep a written record of any TB skin test result and TB medicine taken.

Note: Because you have been exposed to TB, your TB skin test will always stay positive even after taking medicine.



TB medicine is free from the Health department.

For more information about INH, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

For any additional information, call Peel Public Health or visit www.peel-stoptb.ca.

Long, R. & Ellis, E. (Eds.) 2007. Canadian Tuberculosis Standards, 6th Edition, Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Lung Association/Canadian Thoracic Society.

Repehinsky, C. & Wellbanks, L. (Eds.) 2010. Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Pharmaceutics Association.