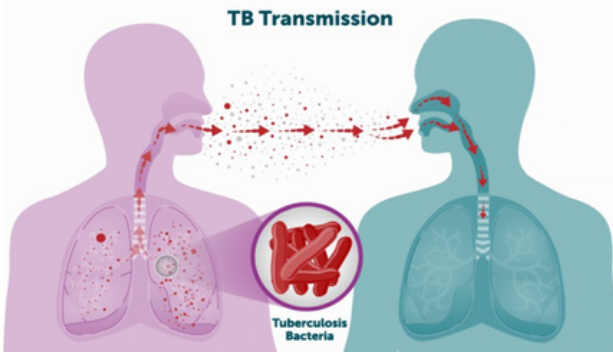


# What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacteria. TB has two forms: latent TB infection (LTBI) and active TB disease. When a person breathes in TB bacteria, it enters their lungs and may begin to grow. At first, they may not feel sick. This is called **LTBI**. If people with LTBI do not take medicine to kill the TB bacteria in their body, it can turn into **active TB disease**, making them feel sick and able to spread their germs to those around them.

People with TB may feel **shame** and may not want to take part in activities because of **misinformation** about TB and **stigma** (a mark of disapproval). It is important to learn about the facts about TB to help your friends and family understand these common myths about TB.



CDC, Tuberculosis: Causes and How it Spreads, 2025

## Resources



**Health Department Chest Centers** provide low to no cost testing, treatment, and care for TB, regardless of immigration status, insurance status, or ability to pay.

Call **844-692-4692** to make an appointment.



**The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** offers resources to providers and community members about TB in various languages.

[www.nyc.gov/health/tb](http://www.nyc.gov/health/tb)



**We are TB** provides virtual support meetings for TB patients, survivors, and family members.

[wearetb.com](http://wearetb.com)

## About The Coalition

The Coalition for a TB-Free NYC's mission is to prevent and eliminate TB in NYC through community engagement, public-private partnership, and innovation & research. The Coalition unites various stakeholders to develop, implement, and evaluate a strategic plan to eliminate TB in NYC with a human rights-, social justice- and patient-centered approach.

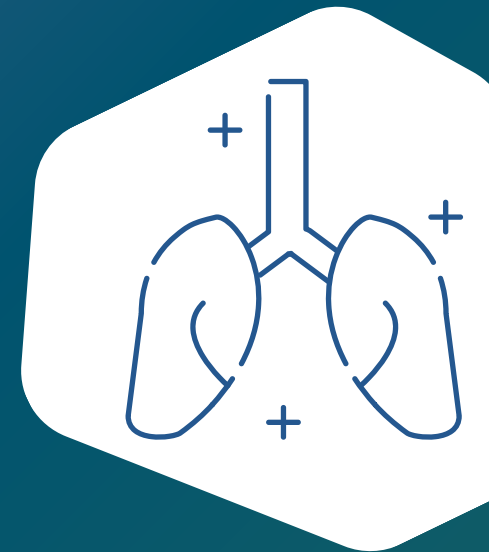


<https://tbfreenyc.wixsite.com/tbfreenyc>



The Coalition For  
A TB-Free NYC

# Tuberculosis: Myths and Facts



Learn the facts about  
10 common TB myths!

# 10 Common TB Myths & Facts

**1** Tuberculosis (TB) is not a health concern in the US.

**Fact:** TB is the world's #1 deadliest infectious disease and continues to affect thousands of people in the US.

**2** TB is spread through shaking hands, sharing utensils, straws, and dishes, and/or wearing someone else's clothing.

**Fact:** TB is an airborne disease and spreads when a person who is sick with TB coughs, sneezes, sings, or speaks. TB does not spread through physical touch because the germs do not survive on surfaces.

**3** The BCG vaccine makes you immune to TB.

**Fact:** BCG vaccination at birth helps to reduce the risk of TB in young children, but the vaccine's protection decreases in people older than 5 years old.

**4** There is no cure for TB infection or disease.

**Fact:** TB is curable and preventable. Effective treatment is available for LTBI and active TB.

**5** Everyone with TB is contagious.

**Fact:** Not everyone with TB can make others sick. A person with LTBI has no symptoms and is not able to spread TB. A person with active TB disease usually has symptoms and can spread TB to others.

**6** There is no treatment for latent TB infection (LTBI).

**Fact:** There are several effective short-course treatments for treating LTBI. They are effective and safe.

**"I would love people to have more awareness about TB and how easily latent TB can be treated, so that maybe people will get tested more and we'd have less issues with people having active TB disease and being sick and contagious."**

**Kelcie, TB Survivor**

**7** I don't feel sick anymore, so I can stop my medication and am cured.

**Fact:** TB disease is usually treated for 6 to 9 months, but sometimes it takes longer. Even if you start feeling better you must keep taking your medicine until your doctor says you are cured.

**8** Latent TB infection (LTBI) is not serious and does not need treatment.

**Fact:** LTBI can develop into active TB disease at any time after a person has been infected with TB bacteria. Treating the infection before it becomes active is a healthy choice in protecting a person from developing active TB disease, becoming ill, and spreading it to others.

**9** Since I already completed TB treatment, I can no longer get TB again.

**Fact:** Treating and curing TB does not give you lifelong protection. You can become reinfected if you are exposed to TB again, especially if you live in an area with a lot of TB or have a weak immune system.

**10** People with TB are not stigmatized.

**Fact:** People with TB are often discriminated for having TB due to its associations with poverty and other negative social factors. These myths often cause others to treat people with TB with disapproval.

