Tuberculosis
(TB)

TB is short for tuberculosis. This is often a disease of the lungs. If a person with TB disease coughs or sneezes, anyone who is near can breathe the TB germs into their lungs. A person can get TB by spending a lot of time near someone who has TB and is coughing or sneezing. You cannot get TB from someone's clothes or drinking glass. You cannot get TB by shaking hands with someone.

A person can be infected with TB and not feel sick. This is called **TB infection**. But in some people, the TB germs can cause a fever, weight loss, sweating at night, coughing up blood, and chest pain. This is called **TB disease.** TB disease can go into the lungs or other parts of the body. If people have TB disease, they need medical help. If they do not get help, they can die.

A good way to tell if you have TB is by a skin test.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

If you have **TB disease:**

- The doctor can give you medicines that will cure TB. These medicines must be taken for at least 6 to 9 months so that all of the TB germs can be killed. It is important that you take all of your medicine, even after you start to feel better. If you do not take all of your medicine, the TB germs that are left over will become stronger. Then you will need to take even stronger medicines to treat it.
- Cover your cough to keep from spreading the TB germs. If you are coughing in a clinic, hospital, or emergency room waiting area, ask for a mask.

Along with taking your medicines, there are things you can do to help care for yourself and your family:

- If you have TB infection or TB disease, get your family and close friends to take a skin test so that they can start treatment if needed.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You sweat at night.
- You have a cough lasting 3 weeks or longer.
- You cough up blood.
- You have pain with breathing.
- You have chest pain.

These are all signs of **TB disease.**

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 10/15/2010
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