

What is XDR-TB?

XDR-TB is MDR-TB that is resistant to three or more of the six TB drugs. Resistance to anti-TB drugs occurs primarily due to poorly managed TB care (incorrect drug prescribed by providers or patient non-adherence to treatment).

What role can I play to prevent TB among other learners?

- Recognise and act on the symptoms of TB in yourself, fellow learners and family members
 - Participate in lessons on TB as one of the communicable diseases during Life Skills / Life Orientation periods
 - Inform your parents and educators and consult with the local health facility as soon as you suspect TB disease
 - Participate in the Integrated School Health Programme implemented at your school to get help
- Take treatment as advised by the nurse or doctor and go back to school as soon as the clinic says you can no longer infect other children. This usually takes 10-14 days after starting TB treatment
 - Tell other learners and family members to keep (class) rooms well ventilated by opening windows and doors to stop the spread of TB, even in winter
 - Be aware that other children may tease and/or discriminate you for being sick with TB disease. When this happens, don't feel offended. Instead, educate them about TB that it is curable and that TB can affect any person
 - Inform your fellow learners and family members about cough hygiene (a) **Cough into a tissue.** (b) **Coughing into your elbow/sleeve** is preferable to your hands to prevent the spread of infection. If you do cough into your hand, wash your hands as soon as possible
 - Support other learners or family members who may be taking TB treatment by ensuring that they take treatment at the correct times as directed

“Let us join hands for a TB-free world”

- ♥ Zero new HIV and TB infections;
- ♥ Zero preventable deaths from HIV and TB; and
- ♥ Zero discrimination associated with HIV, STIs and TB.

A Message to Learners on Tuberculosis



basic education

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Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



What causes TB?

TB is caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bacteria usually affect the lungs, but TB bacteria can affect any part of the body such as the kidney, spine and brain. If not treated properly, TB disease can result in death.

People who are at most risk of TB disease are:

- Young children less than 3 years of age
- People living with HIV
- Those who live in over-crowded or closed areas with poor ventilation
- Drug and alcohol abusers
- People with cancer or other conditions that weaken the immune system

How is TB spread?

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. When a TB patient coughs tiny drops containing the TB bacteria circulate in the room. These tiny droplets are inhaled by other persons in the room. This is how the TB spread which is similar to the spread of the common cold. The TB bacteria are spread in the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings.

What are the symptoms of TB?

- A cough that lasts 2 weeks or longer
- Weight loss
- Fever for more than 7 days
- Coughing up blood or sputum
- Weakness or fatigue
- No appetite
- Sweating at night

Latent TB versus TB Disease

While over 80% of South Africans are infected may have the TB bacteria present in their body (**Latent TB** which is non-infectious and causes no symptoms), a smaller number will progress to get **TB disease** because of a weakened immune system. People with TB disease are sick and may spread the bacteria to other people.

“People with TB disease are sick and may spread the bacteria to other people. A person with TB may need to stay at home until their TB is no longer infectious. Time away from school has an adverse effect on learning”

Why is it important to identify symptoms of Tuberculosis?

Many children and adolescents are affected by Tuberculosis (TB) that can result in preventable disease and death. The risk of TB disease decreases after the age of 3, but it increases again in adolescence.

When you have TB disease you may be required to stay at home until the TB becomes non-infectious. Non-infectious means that the patient with TB will not infect other children or adults with TB. This usually happens within 10-14 days of starting TB treatment. However, any time away from school may have an adverse impact on your learning, as you will miss out on a number of lessons and may be stigmatised due to being ill from TB.

What can be done?

It is crucial that if you identify symptoms of TB you get it properly investigated as early as possible at a health facility. If you have been in contact with somebody who has TB disease, you must inform your parents, teacher, doctor or nurse thereof.

TB disease can be treated by taking 4 drugs, for six months. It is very important to finish the medicine, and take the drugs exactly as prescribed. If you stop taking the drugs, you may become sick again. In addition, you may become resistant to the drugs used to treat TB. After two weeks of starting TB treatment, you are no longer be infectious and pose no danger to others. You can resume all your usual activities, including attending school.



What is drug resistant TB?

This is TB disease that does not respond to the usual drugs used to treat TB. It occurs when people do not complete or skip their TB medication. The germs become resistant to the drugs which means the drugs can no longer kill them. Sometimes the germs become resistant to more than one drug, this is called Multi-Drug resistant TB (MDR-TB). This is a serious disease which requires treatment with special drugs that cause more serious side effects. The treatment period is much longer (between 18 and 24 months) and requires hospitalisation at least for the first 2-6 months. The treatment for treating MDR-TB is 30 times more expensive.

If you live with, or spend time with a person who has MDR-TB disease you can also become infected with the TB germ that is resistant to the drugs. In addition, MDR-TB in patients who do not adhere to treatment, may progress to Extensive Drug Resistant TB (XDR-TB), also referred to as Extreme Drug Resistant TB.

How is TB NOT spread?

TB is not spread by:



Shaking someone's hand



Sharing food or drink with someone who is infected with TB



Touching bed linen or toilet seats



Sharing a toothbrush



Kissing