



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Tuberculosis (TB):

Information for people
new to the UK

This leaflet is for people recently arrived in the UK who are attending the TB clinic at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

What is tuberculosis (TB)?

TB is a disease caused by bacteria (germ). It is most common in the lungs or lymph glands but can affect almost any part of the body.

TB can be ACTIVE, causing you to feel unwell and can be infectious (spread from person to person), passed on through the air after coughing or sneezing.

TB can be LATENT (sleeping). This means you are well and cannot pass on the infection to others. Latent TB can develop into active TB at some point later in your life so you may be offered treatment to stop this happening. This can be diagnosed by a blood test or skin test.

TB can be cured with treatment.

Treatment is with a course of special antibiotics.

It is free and confidential and does not affect your stay in this country.

Who is more likely to catch TB?

Anyone can catch TB but certain groups of people are more at risk than others:

- People who were born or have lived in countries where TB is more common, e.g. south-east Asia, sub-Saharan Africa
- People who have had close and lengthy contact with an infectious person, e.g. sharing a house.
- People who are living in poor and overcrowded conditions, e.g. homeless or in prison.
- People who have other illnesses that make them less able to fight off infection, e.g. HIV infection.
- People who are dependent on drugs or alcohol.

How will I know I have TB?

Symptoms and signs include:

- A cough that has lasted longer than 3 weeks
- Coughing up blood or sputum (phlegm)
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Fever or night sweats
- General feeling of tiredness and being unwell
- Swollen glands
- Chest pain or breathlessness

How is TB diagnosed?

The usual tests are a small skin test on your arm called a Mantoux or a blood test called a T-spot. You may need a chest x-ray. Tests offered will depend on your age, medical history and symptoms.

All tests and treatment are free of charge.

We see you either at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in the Respiratory Medicine Department (Level 2 South Block) or West Berkshire Community Hospital near Newbury.

You will be seen by a specialist nurse or a doctor who will support you through your treatment.

We are a small but very friendly team who are used to caring for people of all nationalities. We are able to provide interpreters for your hospital visits.

Further information

www.dh.gov.uk

www.tbalert.org

www.hpa.org.uk

www.thetruthabouttb.org

TB Nurse

Direct Tel: 0118 322 8266

Or 0118 322 6882

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