

## WARNING

If patients do not take their medication regularly and for the whole treatment period, the tuberculosis may become active and contagious again. If patients have a bad reaction to the medication, they should tell their doctor or the Direction de santé publique (DSP) as soon as possible.

## WHAT ADVICE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE TUBERCULOSIS?

- To take their anti-tuberculosis medication regularly.
- To cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze.
- To spit in a paper tissue and then throw it away into a closed trash can or a toilet.
- To take care of themselves : to eat well and get a lot of sleep.
- To abstain from alcohol and refrain from smoking.
- To continue their usual leisure and work activities to the best of their ability, according to their doctor's advice.

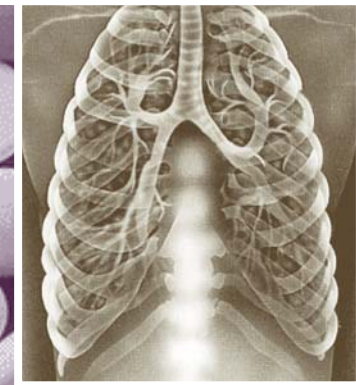
## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE DSP AND THE CLSC?

The DSP is in charge of monitoring, controlling and preventing infectious diseases.

Under the Public Health Protection Act, doctors have to give the DSP information on patients with certain infectious diseases like tuberculosis.

This information allows the DSP or CLSC to contact patients and monitor their progress during treatment. Patients collaborate with the DSP or CLSC in identifying close contacts, who may then receive preventive treatment.

# TUBERCULOSIS



[www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/tuberculose](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/tuberculose)

## WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS?

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease caused by a germ called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

It usually strikes the lungs but it may also affect other organs such as the lymph glands, kidneys, and bones.

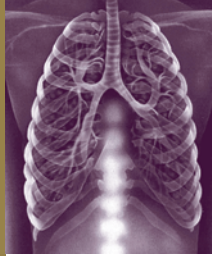
Tuberculosis may develop rapidly after a person's first contact with the germ or may appear several years later.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

These symptoms may appear : significant cough (often productive) that lasts more than three weeks, fever, significant fatigue, loss of appetite, night sweats, and weight loss.

## WHO CAN CATCH TUBERCULOSIS?

Anyone can catch it, young or old, men, women, or children, regardless of age, sex, social status or country of birth.



## HOW DO YOU CATCH TUBERCULOSIS?

When a person who has contagious tuberculosis in the lungs coughs or sneezes, germs are released into the air. The disease can spread when someone breathes in these microbes.

## WHO IS MOST AT RISK OF CATCHING TUBERCULOSIS?

People in prolonged, close contact with an infected individual are the most at risk. People who are most vulnerable are children, the elderly, and people whose physical resistance has been weakened by other diseases or by their lifestyle.

## WHEN IS TUBERCULOSIS CONTAGIOUS?

Tuberculosis can be contagious even before it is diagnosed. It can be more or less contagious depending on the amount of coughing and how serious the illness is.

It usually stops being contagious a few weeks after the beginning of the treatment. A doctor must decide when each case of tuberculosis is no longer contagious.

The danger of catching tuberculosis is greatest for people who live in the same house as the patient, and for certain close friends, co-workers, or school-mates.

## IS IT NECESSARY TO STAY IN HOSPITAL?

Even if it is necessary to stay in hospital, it is usually not for very long. Afterwards, treatment can be continued at home, and patients can lead a normal life.

## CAN TUBERCULOSIS BE TREATED?

Yes, and treating it is a must. If patients take the medication as prescribed, it will cure the tuberculosis and make it non-contagious. This way, patients avoid serious complications and protect close friends and family from the disease.

Several medications (usually two to four different types) are used to treat tuberculosis. They must be taken regularly, over a period of six to twelve months. **In Québec, treatment for tuberculosis is mandatory.**

## WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT THE TREATMENT?

The most important thing is to take the medication as prescribed, at the time of day it is most convenient.

It is very important that patients take the medication for the whole prescribed period, even if they are feeling better.

It is also very important that patients go to all doctor's appointments and check-ups to make sure they are getting better.

