



WHAT IS DR-TB?

TB is a disease caused by germs that mainly causes problems in the lungs and can be dangerous if not treated. DR-TB is a sickness that is caused by the same germ, but the germ is stronger and cannot be treated with the normal medications used for TB. The disease can be cured, but requires more medications given for a longer period of time.

HOW IS DR-TB SPREAD?

DR-TB is spread through the air, after a sick person coughs the germs and other people breathe them in. When a person coughs DR-TB germs into the air, they remain there for a long time, unless they are blown away by a breeze or killed by the light of the sun. Another person breathing this air can become infected with DR-TB. The disease spreads better in people who spend a lot of time indoors together, such as those who sleep in the same room, live in the same house, or share meals together on a regular basis.

This resource is designed to help families understand drug-resistant TB disease and infection.



Sentinel Project
on pediatric drug-resistant tuberculosis

This pamphlet was developed by the
Sentinel Project on Pediatric Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis
<http://www.sentinel-project.org/>

GET THE FACTS ABOUT DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS

A RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES



WHAT IS DR-TB INFECTION?

When a person breathes in the DR-TB germs, sometimes a small number of them invade the lungs and stay there. The person may be fine and have no signs or symptoms at all. This is called DR-TB "infection." In many cases, this DR-TB will stay controlled by the body and not cause any problems. However, in some people, these germs can multiply in number and cause problems in the body.

WHAT IS DR-TB DISEASE?

When the DR-TB germs have multiplied, they cause DR-TB disease. People with DR-TB disease usually have problems with their bodies and they feel sick. Some of these problems may include weight loss or failure to gain weight, tiredness, cough, fever, sweats, headache and lumps in the neck, armpits or groin. Someone with DR-TB disease needs treatment quickly to make them healthy again and to stop them from spreading the disease to others.

HOW IS DR-TB DISEASE DIAGNOSED?

A person who has health problems like the ones described above should be evaluated by a health provider. This provider will examine that person looking for signs of disease, take an Xray of the chest or other parts of the body to look for TB, and get a sample of sputum or other fluids to look for the TB germ. Based on the results of all these tests, a health care provider will decide if a person has DR-TB disease or if there is another reason for the sickness the person is feeling.



HOW IS DR-TB DISEASE TREATED?

DR-TB is a powerful disease and in order to make it go away, persons with the disease will take a number of medications (usually 4 or 5) for a period of 2 years. This can be difficult, but taking the medications every day is the only way to make sure that health returns.

HOW AND WHY IS DR-TB INFECTION TREATED?

People who have been infected by DR-TB but who are not sick have a high risk of becoming sick if nothing is done to stop the disease from getting stronger in the body. One way to stop the disease is to give some medication to the person who has been infected. The number of medications given is less and the period of time they are given for is shorter than for people with DR-TB disease.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT DR-TB IN MY HOUSEHOLD?

There are many ways to prevent DR-TB. The most important is to recognize the signs and symptoms of DR-TB and immediately take the person with these problems to the health center so they can be started on treatment. Other ways to prevent DR-TB are to keep the windows open and make sure there is good flow of air in the house. Another way is to have fans in the house that can move air around, and to make sure there is sunlight in the house and that persons with DR-TB spend as much time as possible outside. If possible, persons with DR-TB should not share beds with others in the family. Furthermore, family members should give as much encouragement as possible to persons with DR-TB disease or infection receiving medications so they can finish treatment and stay healthy.



COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DR-TB IN CHILDREN

- 1 Tiredness
- 2 Failure to gain weight
- 3 Weight loss
- 4 Cough for more than 2 weeks
- 5 Fever for more than 2 weeks
- 6 Nightsweats
- 7 Joint swelling
- 8 Lumps in the neck, armpit or groin
- 9 Back pain or swelling
- 10 Headache
- 11 Loss of interest in playing
- 12 Sleepiness without being able to wake*
- 13 Vomiting without diarrhea*

*These are danger signs and should prompt emergency referral to a health provider