



FAST FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TB

Tuberculosis (or TB) is a life-threatening disease that is a problem in many countries and continues to take millions of lives every year. According to the World Health Organisation, 1.3 Million people died globally from TB in 2022 (including 167 000 people with HIV). Worldwide, TB is the second leading infectious killer after COVID-19 (above HIV and AIDS).

In 2022, an estimated 10.6 million people fell ill with tuberculosis (TB) worldwide, including 5.8 million men, 3.5 million women and 1.3 million children. TB is present in all countries and age groups.

TB IS CURABLE AND PREVENTABLE

The NICD reports that more than 304,000 (832/day) people in South Africa contracted tuberculosis (TB) and 56,000 (153/ day) died as a result of this preventable and treatable disease in 2021.

Despite these alarming figures, the country has seen a more than 50% drop in new infections and a nearly two-thirds drop in associated deaths since 2009.

The NICD reports that unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the TB challenge and had a negative impact on national gains and TB services.

HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:



Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection that develops in the lungs

It is highly contagious, and usually spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes or spits.



South Africa has been facing a TB crisis for many years. According to the World Health Organisation

There are over 250 000 new cases of TB in our country per year. The good news is that this number is coming down (from 8% to 3%), and the World Health Organisation has invested a lot of money into different cures for the infection.



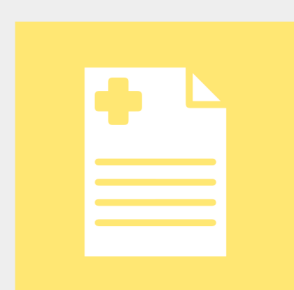
People with HIV have a higher chance of getting TB

Because their immune system isn't strong enough to withstand the bacterial infection.



Tuberculosis is curable and preventable

Over the past couple of years, the World Health Organisation has worked to develop various medication programmes that kill the bacteria in the body. What's important to remember is that TB can only be cured if you finish the full course of treatment, which can be from six to eight months. If you do not, the infection will simply come back and the likelihood of developing drug-resistant TB (which is very difficult to be treated) is very high.



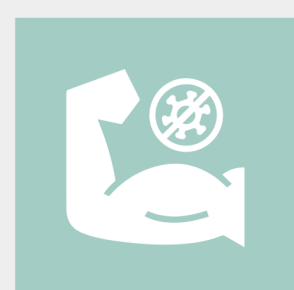
Slow diagnosis is one of the biggest reasons TB is a problem in SA

Because patients don't get diagnosed fast enough, they can't get treatment in time. The result is that TB continues to go untreated, and spreads at a rapid rate in our communities.



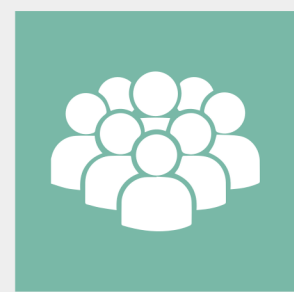
Multidrug resistant TB (MDR-TB)

Is a growing global phenomenon and especially dangerous in South Africa. This is because multiple strains of the bacteria have developed that normal TB medicines can't fight. Treatment for this form of TB is very harsh and takes much longer. This strain of TB can be spread to a person who has never had TB before, making it very difficult to tackle.



You can have TB bacteria in your body without showing any of the symptoms

This is known as "latent TB". Because your immune system is strong, it stops the bacteria from spreading and you're not contagious. If you get HIV, for instance, the bacteria can become active and make you sick.



"Poor infection control" is a big problem in South Africa

Overcrowded spaces with poor ventilation such as taxis, buses, offices, prisons and clinic waiting rooms keep the bacteria locked into small spaces and other people breathe in the bacteria. Without high control of sanitation (constantly wiping down potentially infected areas, ensuring fresh air moving through the spaces etc) this will continue to be a key problem in preventing TB.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you're worried that you might have TB, you can get tested for free at your nearest clinic. The tests usually involve a phlegm/spit sample, skin test or X-ray, and treatment is free at clinics.



For more information, support and advice feel free to reach out to us on transneteap@mhg.co.za

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