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The Facts about **TUBERCULOSIS**

 **Health Promotion & Disease
Prevention Directorate**



**Ministry for Health,
the Elderly and
Community Care**

Q What is TB Disease?

Active TB disease occurs when a weakened immune system fails to fight the inhaled TB germs, bacteria manage to escape and then spread in the body causing TB disease.

Q How is TB spread?

TB is only spread by airborne droplet infection, when a person with active TB disease coughs, sneezes and speaks and TB germs are expelled into the air. A person can get infected when s/he inhales these germs, and when s/he is in direct prolonged (several hours) contact with this patient.

Q What is Latent TB infection?

Latent TB infection occurs when inhaled TB germs are controlled by the immune system, which when healthy, is able to fight the bacteria to stop them from growing, making them inactive in the body for years.

Q Who is most at risk of developing TB disease?

- Individuals with untreated latent TB infection
- Close contacts of a person with active TB disease
- Immunocompromised people (the elderly, patients with HIV infection, diabetes, cancer etc)
- People coming from high risk countries of TB disease

Q Does BCG vaccine protect me?

BCG protects babies and children <5 years old against the most severe forms of TB, like meningeal and miliary TB.

Q Is Latent TB Infection and TB disease treatable?

Effective treatment is available for both latent TB infection and active TB disease but must be taken as prescribed by a doctor.

