

FINAL (2-19-08)

Questions & Sample Answers / ECHO-TV Show # 404-405
"Tuberculosis (TB) Awareness and Treatment"

HOSTS: In your introduction of this subject (show beginning) please be sure to mention "TB or Tuberculosis is a serious disease but it is treatable and curable. This show will help you learn more about this important subject to our community..." (watch edited piece)

1. Why is it important for me, my family, and my community to know about TB?

- TB is a serious disease.
- TB is common in Africa, Asia, Mexico, and South America. People who have lived in these places are at risk for having TB.
- Because TB spreads in the air anyone can get TB. TB affects individuals, families, and communities.
- (we say this in bullet 3)
- The good news is that you can help prevent and cure TB!

2. Tell me more about how TB is spread.

- TB is a bacteria (germ) that is spread through the air when someone with active TB disease in their lungs coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- Only people with active TB disease in their lungs can spread TB germs.
- A person with active TB disease is most likely to spread TB germs to people that they spend a lot of time with such as people with whom they live.
- You can't get TB from shaking hands, or sharing food or eating utensils, or other objects.

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- You can't get TB from quick, casual contact, like passing someone on the street or at a store.

3. Tell me more about latent TB infection

- People with latent TB infection have TB germs in their body but the germs are “asleep.” They don't feel sick and can't spread TB germs to others.
- It is important for people with latent TB infection to take medicine to kill the TB germs. Otherwise the TB germs may “wake up” and cause active TB disease.
- People with latent TB infection need to take 1 medicine (called “INH”) for the full 9 months. Even if you don't feel sick, it is important to take all of the medicine to be sure that all of the TB germs are killed.

4. Tell me more about active TB disease

- People with active TB disease have TB germs that are “awake.”
- When the TB germs are “awake” they cause damage to the body until the right medicine is taken.
- TB can be in the lungs or other parts of the body
- Most people with active TB disease feel sick.
- People with active TB disease may :
 - Cough for 3 weeks or longer
 - Lose weight
 - Sweat at night
 - Have a fever
 - Feel tired or weak
- If people have these symptoms it is very important that they see a doctor right away.
- People with active TB disease will need to take many medicines for 6 to 12 months.

5. What does it take to cure active TB disease?

- Treatment takes a long time because the TB germs are very strong.
- People with active TB disease need to take all of their medicine until their doctor says they are cured.
- They need to see their doctor at least once a month to make sure that the medicines are working.

6. Who should be tested for TB?

- You should be tested for TB if:
 - you lived in parts of the world where TB is common
 - you have spent time with someone who had active TB disease, especially your young child or if you have HIV infection or other health problems that weaken your immune system.
 - you work in a healthcare setting.
- The only way to find out if you have latent TB infection or active TB disease is to go to a doctor and have a medical examination and tests.
 - If you have a doctor, make an appointment.
 - If you don't have a doctor, contact your public health department.

7. If I've had BCG (the TB vaccine) what should I do?

- People who had the TB vaccine can get latent TB infection and active TB disease.
- The TB vaccine protects young children from some of the worst kinds of active TB disease, but that protection goes away after a few years.
- The TB vaccine sometimes causes a positive TB skin test reaction. But this reaction is usually due to TB germs in the body, not from the TB vaccine.
- If you've had the TB vaccine you can still protect yourself by taking medicine for LTBI.

8. I've heard people talk about DOT. What is DOT? Why does someone need to have DOT?

- Directly Observed Therapy, or DOT, is when a nurse or health care worker from your public health department sees you every day to give you TB medicine and make sure the medicine is working and you get all the medicine you need.
- Some people have side effects from TB medicine Don't be afraid – your doctor, DOT representative, nurse or health care provider can help you with the side effects so that you can continue your treatment.

9. Why does TB have such stigma in our community?

- Some people think that people with TB are poor, dirty or were cursed. People with TB were separated from their families. They were shunned.
- People with TB are often afraid of making those around them sick and wonder how they will take care of their families.
- Some people may be afraid that TB will affect their immigration status. This is not true. Your doctor only wants to treat you TB. He or she doesn't know about your immigration status.

10. (optional if time permits) As a healthcare professional, what do you believe about TB?

- We know that TB is caused by a germ that is spread through the air. It can affect anyone, regardless of how much money they make or their behavior.
- There is no need to be ashamed about TB.
- The good news is that not everyone with TB needs to be separated from their families or stop working. If people do need to be separated from their families it is usually only for a couple of weeks.
- The doctors, nurses, and outreach workers who work with TB patients will keep your identity confidential/secret.
- Can get information from the many sources including:
 - Your local library and ECHO's website (we'll link to the bottom two web sites so let's delete to save time