

# Tuberculosis

Single  
Point  
Lesson 1

## What is Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial infection spread through inhaling tiny droplets from the coughs or sneezes of an infected person. TB mainly affects the lungs, however it can affect any part of the body, including the glands, bones and nervous system.

## Typical symptoms of Pulmonary TB include:

A persistent cough that lasts more than three weeks  
Night sweats  
High temperature (fever)  
Tiredness and fatigue , Loss of appetite.

## Risk Factors for TB

Contact with a person who has had infectious TB.  
People who have lived or worked in a country with high TB risk.  
People whose immune system is affected by illness, or immunosuppressive drug therapy

## TB and Key points to remember for Dental practitioners.

TB is generally spread within households and especially those who have prolonged exposure to the index case and therefore the risk in dentistry is low.

Treatment should also be temporarily withheld from patients who show possible signs of TB infection. These signs include a prolonged cough of three to four weeks, coughing up blood, unexplained fever, fatigue or malaise, night sweats, and unexplained weight loss. These symptoms may also indicate other serious health problems for a patient so it is a good idea to delay treatment.

TB can only be spread from patients who have pulmonary/ laryngeal infection. Non pulmonary TB is not infectious and patient's can be treated at any time.

Defer elective dental treatment for patients with active pulmonary TB until your patient has had 14 days of treatment.

The correct PPE should be used if your patient needs treatment which cannot be delayed. Ensure your patient is separated from other patients in the waiting area.

Dental health practitioners should have the BCG vaccine.

The TB nurses who work in the infection control team are available if you have any questions regarding TB and infection control. Telephone number: 01744 457 314