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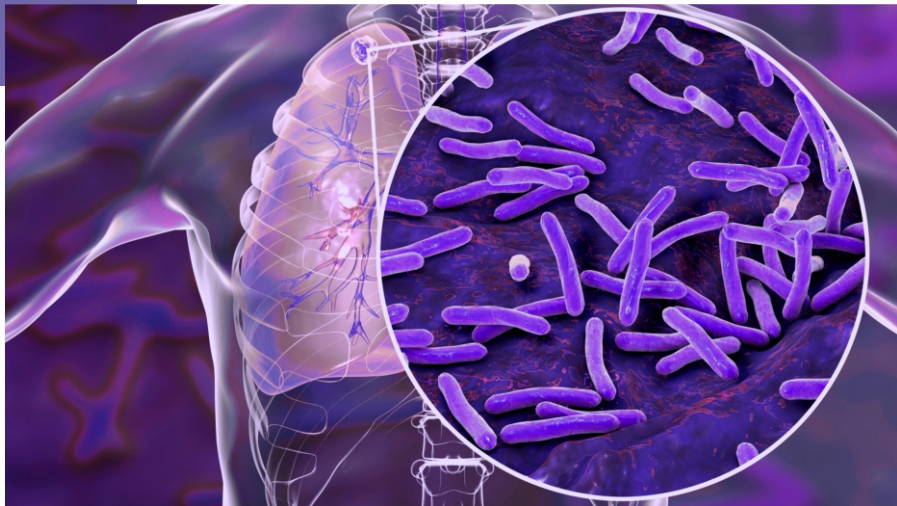
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Understanding
Tuberculosis?



What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis, often abbreviated as TB, is a bacterial infection caused by *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis*. This infectious disease primarily affects the lungs but can also target other parts of the body. Tuberculosis is a serious health concern, but with early detection and appropriate treatment, it is treatable.

How does Tuberculosis Spread?

Tuberculosis is an airborne disease, which means it spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Inhaling the bacteria can lead to infection. Tuberculosis is not easily transmitted and usually requires prolonged close contact with an infected individual.

How common is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is common in developing countries. The death rate from Tuberculosis is comparatively decreasing but it still causes about two million deaths per year worldwide. The main risk factors for Tuberculosis in the developing world are:

- Persistent cough lasting for more than three weeks
- Coughing up blood or sputum
- Unintentional weight loss
- Fatigue and weakness
- Fever and night sweats
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Loss of appetite

It's crucial to seek medical attention if one experiences these symptoms, especially if one has been in contact with a patient diagnosed with Tuberculosis.

Diagnosis

Tuberculosis is diagnosed through various tests, including:

- **Tuberculin Skin Test (TST):** A small amount of Tuberculin is injected under the skin, and a healthcare professional checks for a reaction after 48-72 hours
- **Blood Tests:** Interferon-Gamma Release Assays (IGRAs) are blood tests that detect Tuberculosis infection
- **Chest X-ray:** Imaging tests can reveal abnormalities in the lungs that could be indicative of Tuberculosis
- **Sputum Culture:** A sample of sputum is collected and analysed for the presence of Tuberculosis bacteria

Treatment

Tuberculosis is treated with a combination of antibiotics. It is essential to complete the entire course of medication, even if symptoms improve before the medication is finished. Skipping doses or stopping treatment prematurely can lead to drug resistance thus making the treatment more challenging.



Prevention

Preventing the spread of Tuberculosis involves:

- **Isolation:** During the infectious period, patients may need to be isolated to prevent the spread of bacteria to others
- **Vaccination:** The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) Vaccine can protect against severe forms of Tuberculosis particularly in children
- **Good Respiratory Hygiene:** Covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and encouraging others to do the same
- **Ventilation:** Ensure good ventilation in living and working spaces



Living with Tuberculosis

If diagnosed with Tuberculosis, it's essential to:

- **Adhere to Medication:** Take prescribed medications as directed by the healthcare provider. Skipping doses or stopping treatment prematurely can lead to drug-resistant Tuberculosis
- **Follow-up Appointments:** Attend all follow-up appointments to monitor treatment progress and address any concerns
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Maintain a healthy diet, get adequate rest, and avoid smoking or excessive alcohol consumption

Tuberculosis is a serious but treatable disease. With early diagnosis, appropriate treatment, and adherence to medical advice, most individuals recover completely. It is essential for the patient to play an active role in their treatment by following prescribed treatments and taking preventive measures to protect others from Tuberculosis.

