

## TUBERCULOSIS (TB) GLOSSARY

**Active TB Disease:** An illness in which TB bacteria are multiplying and attacking different parts of the body. The symptoms of active TB disease include weakness, weight loss, fever, no appetite, chills, and sweating at night. Other symptoms of active TB disease depend on where in the body the bacteria are growing. If active TB disease is in the lungs (pulmonary TB), the symptoms may include a bad cough, pain in the chest, and coughing up blood. A person with active TB disease may be infectious and spread TB to others.

**BCG:** A vaccine for TB named after the French scientists who developed it, Calmette and Guérin. BCG is not widely used in the United States, but it is often given to infants and small children in other countries where TB is common.

**Chest X-Ray:** A picture of the inside of your chest. A chest x-ray is made by exposing a film to x-rays that pass through your chest. A doctor can look at this film to see whether TB bacteria have damaged your lungs.

**\*Co-infection:** A term used to describe infection with more than one disease, and often used to describe infection with both TB and HIV.

**Contact:** A person who has spent time with a person with infectious TB.

**Culture:** A test to see whether there are TB bacteria in your phlegm or other body fluids. This test can take 2 to 4 weeks in most laboratories.

**Directly Observed Therapy Short-Course (DOTS):** A way of helping patients take their medicine for TB. If you get DOTS, you will meet with a health care worker every day or several times a week. You will meet at a place you both agree on. This can be the TB clinic, your home or work, or any other convenient location. You will take your medicine while the health care worker watches.

**\*Endemic:** The constant presence of a disease or infectious agent within a given geographic area or population group; can also refer to the usual prevalence of a given disease within such area or group.

**\*Epidemic:** The occurrence of more cases of disease than expected in a given area or among a specific group of people over a particular period of time

**Extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB):** XDR-TB is a rare type of TB disease that is resistant to nearly all medicines used to treat TB.

**Extrapulmonary TB:** Active TB disease in any part of the body other than the lungs (for example, the kidney, spine, brain, or lymph nodes).

**HIV Infection:** Infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). A person with both latent TB infection and HIV infection is at very high risk for active TB disease.

**\*High Burden Countries (HBCs), TB:** Twenty-two countries, most of which are in Africa and South-East Asia, that account for much of the world's TB burden (approximately 80% of new TB cases each year).

**\*Immune system:** The body's system of defense against foreign organisms such as bacteria, viruses or fungi.

**INH or Isoniazid:** A medicine used to prevent active TB disease in people who have latent TB infection. INH is also one of the four medicines often used to treat active TB disease.

**Latent TB Infection:** A condition in which TB bacteria are alive but inactive in the body. People with latent TB infection have no symptoms, don't feel sick, can't spread TB to others, and usually have a positive skin test reaction. But they may develop active TB disease if they do not receive treatment for latent TB infection.

**\*Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB):** A strain of tuberculosis that is resistant to two or more anti-TB drugs. MDR-TB usually arises when people take only enough medication to feel better, but not the full amount prescribed by a physician. The weaker bacteria are killed, but the stronger bacteria survive and reproduce. These stronger bacteria, when fully grown and causing sickness again, will not be curable with the same treatment and require larger doses of the drug or an entirely new, stronger drug. MDR-TB is a large problem in developing countries, where continual supervision of treatment is not always possible.

**\*Mycobacterium tuberculosis:** Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The disease usually affects the lungs but can spread to other parts of the body in serious cases. An individual can become infected with TB when another person who has active TB coughs, sneezes or spits. Not all people who become infected with TB develop symptoms. Those who do not become ill are referred to as having latent TB and cannot spread the disease to others.

**Negative:** Usually refers to a test result. If you have a negative TB skin test reaction, you probably do not have TB infection.

**Positive:** Usually refers to a test result. If you have a positive TB skin test reaction, you probably have TB infection.

**Pulmonary TB:** Active TB disease that occurs in the lungs, usually producing a cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer. Most active TB disease is pulmonary.

**QuantiFERON-TB® Gold (QFT):** A blood test used to find out if you are infected with TB bacteria. The QFT measures the response to TB proteins when they are mixed with a small amount of blood.

**Resistant Bacteria:** Bacteria that can no longer be killed by a certain medicine.

**Smear:** A test to see whether there are TB bacteria in your phlegm. To do this test, lab workers smear the phlegm on a glass slide, stain the slide with a special stain, and look for any TB bacteria on the slide. This test usually takes one day to get the results.

**Sputum:** Phlegm coughed up from deep inside the lungs. Sputum is examined for TB bacteria using a smear; part of the sputum can also be used to do a culture.

**\*TB-HIV Co-infection:** When a cell is co-infected by both HIV and tuberculosis (TB). TB-HIV co-infection is of particular concern because TB accelerates the progression of HIV-related immune suppression making it one of the leading causes of death among people living with HIV and AIDS.

**TB Skin Test:** A test that is often used to detect latent TB infection. A liquid called tuberculin is injected under the skin on the lower part of your arm. If you have a positive reaction to this test, you probably have latent TB infection.

**Tuberculin or PPD:** A liquid that is injected under the skin on the lower part of your arm during a TB skin test. If you have latent TB infection, you will probably have a positive reaction to the tuberculin.

**\*XDR-TB:** Acronym for “extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis,” which is an even stronger strain of TB bacteria that is resistant to both first-line and second-line drugs used to treat the disease. It is virtually untreatable. XDR-TB usually arises when people take only enough medication to feel better, but not the full amount prescribed by a physician. The weaker bacteria are killed, but the stronger bacteria survive and reproduce.

## REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Glossary of Terms Related to TB* (2007), [www.cdc.gov/tb/faqs/qa\\_glossary.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tb/faqs/qa_glossary.htm)

*\*Definition provided by the Kaiser Family Foundation.*