TB: What Now?

I had a positive skin or blood test

Talk with a health care provider

A positive test for TB Infection only tells that a person has been infected with TB germs. It does not tell if the person has active TB disease. Talk with a health care provider about:

- test results
- scheduling additional tests and examinations
- whether or not you need to isolate and when you can get back to your daily routine

TB Infection (formerly LTBI) or TB Disease

Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. As a result, two TB related conditions exist: TB infection and TB disease.

TB Infection: When TB bacteria are in the body, but not active. People with LTBI do not feel sick. They cannot spread the bacteria to others.

TB Disease: When TB bacteria are active and growing in your body. People with TB disease of the lungs can spread the bacteria to people they spend time with every day.

You may need more tests

Other tests are needed such as a chest x-ray and sometimes sputum samples. Talk with a health care provider about scheduling appointments for these tests.

- If tests results return normal, you may need to complete treatment for TB Infection (formerly LTBI).
- For any other results, your health care provider will evaluate you for active TB disease.

Symptoms of active TB Disease:

TB bacteria usually grow in the lungs and may cause symptoms such as:

- a bad cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer
- pain in the chest
- coughing up blood or sputum
- weakness or fatigue
- weight loss
- no appetite
- chills
- fever
- extensive sweating at night

Learn the basics

- Only people with active TB disease can spread TB bacteria to others.
- Not everyone who has been exposed to TB bacteria will get infected.
- TB is very slow growing (months to years). Even people infected with TB bacteria may not develop TB disease.
- People with TB disease are most likely to spread the bacteria to people they spend time with every day, such as family members, friends, coworkers, or schoolmates.

maine.gov/dhhs/tb