TB:

WHAT WE ALL NEED TO KNOW!

What is TB?
TB (Tuberculosis) is a disease caused by TB bacteria.

How does a person get TB?

- TB is spread through the air, like Covid.
- TB bacteria get into the air when someone infected with TB coughs, sneezes, sings, or talks.
- Anyone close to a person with TB can then breathe the TB bacteria into their lungs.
- If a person has TB and is taking treatment properly, this will kill the TB bacteria, and they will not be infectious to others.

TYPES OF TB:

TB in the lungs = Pulmonary TB:
TB affects one or both lungs.
This is the most common kind.

TB outside the lungs = Extrapulmonary TB:
TB affects parts of the body other than the lungs, such as skin, joints, bones, stomach, glands and the brain (TB meningitis).
It can be harder for doctors to find this kind of TB.

Active TB

The TB is active (awake) – because the immune system is weak. The person will feel sick with the TB symptoms, but some people do not have symptoms.

Latent TB

Latent means "sleeping".
The TB bacteria are in a person's body but their immune system can keep the TB under control. The person does not feel sick and will not infect other people.

Western Cape Government
FOR YOU

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TB: WHAT WE ALL NEED TO KNOW!

Anyone that breathes can get TB!

Is TB a common illness?

Yes, it is! In South Africa:

- More than 280,000 people develop TB every year.
- More than 54,000 people die from TB every year.
- In the Western Cape, more than 54 000 developed TB and more than 5000 die every year.

THAT IS WHY ALL PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TB!!

The good news:
TB is a disease which **CAN BE PREVENTED AND CURED!**

Who can get TB?

ANYONE!

But some people are more likely to get TB, like:

- Close contacts of people with TB, especially children under 5.
- People living with chronic diseases that can weaken the immune system- like diabetes, HIV or cancer.
- People who work or live in a place where many people have TB – like health clinics, prisons or mines.
- People who previously had TB are at risk of getting it again.

How is TB linked to HIV?

- People with HIV are more likely to get sick from TB.
- Everyone who tests positive for HIV should also be checked for TB.
- People diagnosed with TB will be offered an HIV test.
- **BUT this does not mean that someone diagnosed with TB has HIV!**

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How do you know whether you might have TB?

Common symptoms are:

- **Fever**
- **Coughing**
- **Weight loss**
- **Tiredness**
- **Sweating at night**

But many people with TB do not have any symptoms.

What should you do if you think you might have TB?

- Go to your local clinic to test for TB.
- You will be asked to cough up sputum (stuff that comes up from the lungs) to send to the lab for a TB test.
- You may need a chest X-ray.
- You may need a urine test.

Where are people with TB treated?

- Most people with any kind of TB get treatment at clinics.
- If you are very sick with TB, you may have to go to hospital. As soon as you feel better, you can get treatment at a clinic.
- TB testing and treatment is free at all government clinics.

TB Treatment:

- For most people TB treatment is taken every day for 6 months.
- Some people may need to take TB treatment for longer.
- Within a few days of taking your treatment, you will no longer spread it to others.
- Once you finish your treatment, you will be cured.
- Failure to take treatment could lead to serious illness and even death.

What can YOU do about TB?

- People who have TB **need love, care and support from their family, friends, neighbours and colleagues** to complete their treatment and decrease the spread of TB.

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TB PREVENTION

How can people protect themselves from getting TB?

1. Prevent TB spreading through the air:
Open windows as much as possible – at home, schools and work places. Fresh air and sunshine will blow the TB bacteria away.

Wear a mask when you have a cough or are in a crowded place.

2. Protecting those more at risk of getting TB with medicines (TPT)
TB Preventive Treatment (TPT) prevents latent TB from becoming Active TB.

People more at risk include close contacts of people with TB, people living with HIV, and anyone who was treated for TB in the past.

How is TPT taken?

There are different types of TPT a person can take TPT:
Every day for 6 months (6H)
Or
Once a week for 3 months = 12 doses (3HP)

Talk to the nurse or doctor at the clinic to find out about different TPT options.

What should close contacts of a person with TB do?

- Go to your nearest clinic for a check-up.
- You need to be tested for TB.
- If you have active TB, you will be given TB treatment.
- If you do not have active TB, you will be provided with TPT medication.

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