

The Victorian Tuberculosis Program

Tablets for latent Tuberculosis infection

Tests showed that you have been infected with tuberculosis at some time in your life. The tuberculosis (TB) germs are inactive, sleeping or dormant in your body. As these TB germs are currently asleep, they are not causing any problems, and you are not infectious to other people. However, there is a small chance that these germs could become active at some stage. When TB germs become active, they cause symptoms such as persistent cough (often lasting longer than 3 weeks), sometimes bloodstained phlegm, fever, sweats, loss of appetite, tiredness or weight loss.

You have been advised to start a course of treatment for Latent Tuberculosis Infection. The most commonly used antibiotics are called ISONIAZID or RIFAMPICIN, and taking this medicine reduces the chance of the sleeping (latent) TB germs waking up and causing health problems in your future life.

Note: If you have latent (sleeping) TB

You do not have active tuberculosis

- You are not sick or infectious.
- You cannot spread the germs to anyone else.

Even though you are not sick you need to take your tablets **daily** for **4, 6 or 9** months. If you miss too many days, the medicine might not work and you won't be protected from developing active TB.

It is important to continue the treatment for the entire time recommended by your doctor to make sure that you are treated adequately.

Make sure you always have enough tablets. The medication is free of charge. Make sure you keep your clinic appointments, so that you are always supplied with your tablets

If you have any problems with side effects it is important to let your doctor know. It is uncommon for isoniazid or rifampicin to make you feel unwell or cause side effects. However, if this happens you should stop taking the tablets and contact the TB nurse or your treating doctor.

Your doctor may also order blood tests from time to time. You should avoid drinking alcohol while taking these tablets.

Some ways to help you remember to take your medicine:

- Keep tablets in a place where you will see them every day, but out of reach of children and out of the sun.
- Ask a partner, relative or friend to remind you daily.
- Use a dosette or pill reminder box, these are available at pharmacies.
- Take tablets at the same time every day, for example, before breakfast, before bed or when you brush your teeth.
- Set a reminder or alarm on your mobile phone.
- Make a note of any missed doses and report this to your doctor on your next visit.

Do not split the dose of tablets: take all the tablets together at one time.

If you forget to take your medicine at the normal time, take it as soon as you remember, and then continue the next day as normal. If you forget to take your tablets for the whole day, just take your normal dose the next day, do not take a double dose.

Remember:

- You cannot pass on the infection to others.
- You must take your tablets **every day**.
- Taking a course of tablets will reduce your risk of the TB germs becoming active and you getting sick from TB.
- You will have regular check-ups at the specialist clinic at the hospital.

For further information contact the Victorian Tuberculosis Program on (03) 9342 9478 or your hospital clinic

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