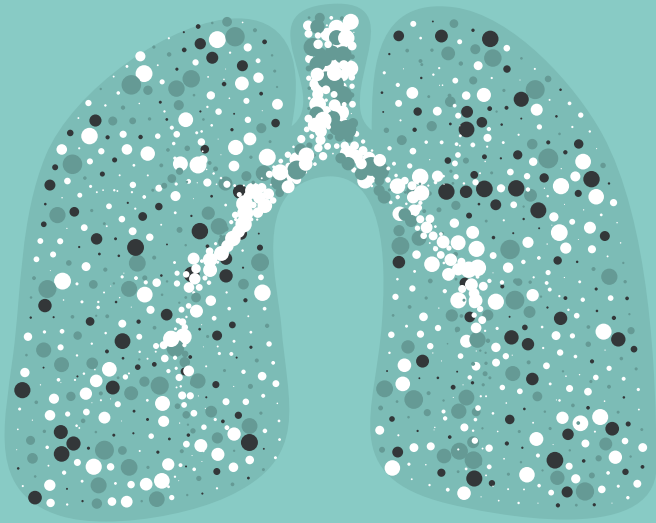


[www.nrbhss.ca/endtb](http://www.nrbhss.ca/endtb)

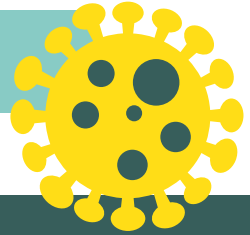


**TB IS CURABLE.  
LET'S FIGHT IT.**



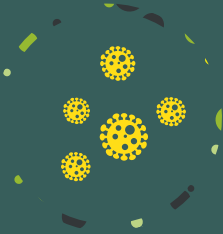
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# What is TB?



## Tuberculosis

is an infectious disease caused by a microbe called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which is invisible to the naked eye and usually found in the lungs. TB is a serious disease if not treated in time. It is treated through medication (antibiotics).



## Active TB

can be very contagious. When a person with pulmonary TB coughs or sneezes, microdroplets of excretions containing TB microbes are projected in the air and can remain suspended for hours, especially in confined spaces.



## TB microbes

can also spread through the air when someone cries, shouts, laughs, speaks or simply breathes. TB is not spread through handshakes or mere touching.



# Difference between active TB and sleeping TB



## Below is what can happen when a person breathes in microdroplets containing TB microbes:

Nothing will happen if the person only spends a short time in the same room with a contagious person with **active TB**;

**Active TB** can develop and, after a certain time, the person becomes sick, develops a persistent cough and then becomes contagious. He or she will need immediate medical treatment;

A person can also be infected with what is called latent (or sleeping) **TB**. **Latent TB** is confined to the lungs where it can remain inactive for the person's entire life without manifesting itself. It does not make the person sick and is not spread to others. An efficient immune system creates a barrier around the microbes and prevents them from spreading. They are therefore safely confined to the lungs. But be careful! The disease can evolve at any time, especially during the first two years after infection. Without treatment, about 1 in 10 persons infected with latent TB will develop active TB during his or her lifetime. That is why latent TB must be treated and eliminated from the organism. Treatment must be followed rigorously in order to be effective.

If not treated, TB can be mortal. Over the past few years in Nunavik, one death has been specifically attributed to TB.

# How is TB detected?



The symptoms of TB can take a long time to appear. When that happens, the organism absolutely needs help. At first, a simple but persistent cough can develop. Progressively, other symptoms can appear:

- an unusual cough that persists for more than two weeks;
- blood in expectorations;
- loss of appetite and weight;
- fever;
- chest pains when breathing;
- night sweats;
- weakness and fatigue.



A person with one or more of these symptoms must visit the CLSC immediately.

In case TB is suspected, several tests can be performed to diagnose the disease, including a skin test, an analysis of expectorations and a lung X-ray. The results of certain tests are available within 48 to 72 hours. If the tests confirm latent TB, medications are proposed to eliminate the microbes from the body and prevent the active form of the disease. In the case of active TB, hospitalization may be necessary and obligatory treatment will be required.



# How is TB treated?

TB can be treated. For the vast majority of persons with the disease, TB is treated here in Nunavik.

The traumatizing experience known to Nunavimmiut during the episodes of tuberculosis in the period from the 1950s to the 1970s continues to haunt Nunavik. TB is treated very differently today; infected patients are no longer systematically sent to the South for treatment. When hospitalization is necessary for an infected patient, most of the time it is in Puvirnituaq or Kuujjuaq. When hospitalization in Montréal is necessary for more serious cases, it is normally for a brief period.

Adults with **active TB** must in general be isolated and are obliged to take medication. But once the disease is stabilized and the patients are no longer contagious, they are discharged from hospital. They must, however, complete their full treatment in order to recover from the disease.

Treatment for active TB can take from six to nine months. In some cases, it can take up to 12 months.

In a person with latent TB, the medication can eliminate the bacteria in four months. However, in some cases, it can take up to nine months. A new, easier treatment (one dose per week for 12 weeks) should be available in Nunavik soon.

Persons with **latent TB** must understand that there is a risk: latent TB can evolve into the active form at any time. It can become contagious, representing a threat for their families and community. Persons with latent TB must be strongly encouraged to take their medication, because it is by doing so that they contribute actively to the eradication of TB in Nunavik.

# Important facts about TB

It is important to be aware of important facts concerning TB in order to dispel myths about the disease and combat the fear associated with it.

## TB is not spread through simple contact.

Handshakes, shared utensils, hugs, touching, kisses, or shared drinks or objects will not spread the disease. TB spreads through the air, when a person with active TB coughs or sneezes. It can also spread merely through laughing, shouting, speaking, singing or breathing. However, a person must remain for several hours in the same closed room as someone with active TB in order to be at risk of being infected. Microdroplets contaminated with TB microbes can spread the disease to those in close contact with a contagious person.



## Tuberculosis can be treated in Nunavik.

Persons with active TB requiring specialized care may be transferred to a hospital in Montréal, but such cases are rather unusual. Most cases will require hospitalization at the Inuulitsivik Health Centre in Puvirnituaq or the Tulattavik Health Centre in Kuujuaq, as well as isolation for approximately two weeks. The more serious the disease, the longer the period of contagiousity and the longer the hospitalization. Once a patient with tuberculosis is no longer contagious, he or she can leave the hospital. However, he or she must continue to take the medication for several months in order to complete the treatment.



## Anyone can be infected with TB.

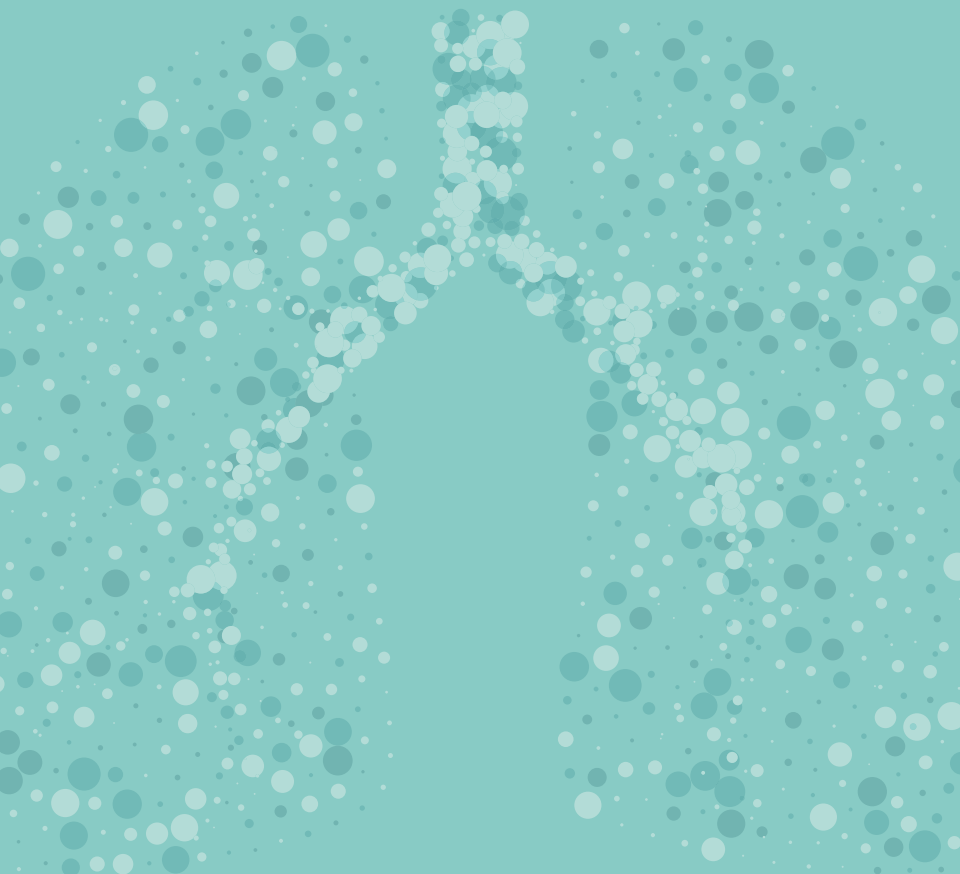
Persons infected with active TB need all the support possible from their family members, friends and the entire community. It is important to know that a person infected with active TB who no longer needs to be hospitalized and who continues to take the necessary medication is no longer contagious and no longer represents any risk to others. He or she must be encouraged to take the medication during the six to nine months of treatment. Stigmatization of persons with TB is harmful not only to those individuals but also to the entire community. It is important to avoid criticizing persons with TB; instead, we should encourage them to complete their treatment and follow the nurse's recommendations.

## Much effort is being invested to eliminate TB in Nunavik.

We are launching a new step in the fight against TB. Nunavik intends to use its part of the recently announced federal funding of \$27.5 M to pursue its objective vigorously of eliminating TB in the region. With the support of the Government of Québec, Nunavik has undertaken a wide-scale plan of action aimed at ending the spread of TB and vanquishing it once and for all. The additional funding will help in mobilizing the communities and equipping them with the medical technologies and expertise necessary to a sustained and permanent effort to eliminate all new cases of active TB, and this perhaps by the end of the next decade. Concurrently, more efforts will be required to tackle the social causes at the root of the TB outbreaks in Nunavik, such as overcrowded housing, food insecurity and smoking.

# 2018

**94% of persons with active TB have completed their treatment. Together, let's continue the fight against TB.**



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