



# PHYSIOBIZ

*Healthcare advice and information you can trust and rely on,  
brought to you by,  
The South African Society of Physiotherapy!*

## TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB can be life-threatening and therefore needs to be diagnosed and treated as soon as possible. The TB bacteria usually attacks the lungs but can also attack other areas of the body such as the kidneys, liver, brain, intestines, muscles, lymph nodes and spine.

“Tuberculosis requires not just a medical history but a call to action.” – Marcus Hinton





## What are the factors that increase your chances of developing active TB?

- HIV infection
- Recent infection with TB (in the last two years)
- Other health conditions, such as diabetes and kidney disease that affect your body's ability to fight infections
- Substance abuse
- Incorrect treatment of a previous TB infection

## How do I get infected with TB?

- TB is spread through the air from one person to another when a person with TB coughs, laughs, sings, or sneezes.
- If you breathe air with TB bacteria, you may get infected. However, TB bacteria can live in the body without making you sick. This is called a latent TB infection and shows that your body is able to fight this infection. With latent TB, you will have no symptoms and you can't spread the TB bacteria to others. Still, latent TB can develop into active TB disease when your immune system weakens.
- Babies, young children, and the elderly are at greater risk of becoming infected with TB disease because they have weaker immune systems.
- If you have been in contact with a person with an active TB infection, you must get tested and receive treatment if needed.



## What are the symptoms of an active TB infection?

- A bad cough that lasts longer than three weeks
- Dull chest pain
- Tightness or discomfort while breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing up blood or phlegm
- Weakness or tiredness
- Unexplained weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Chills and fever
- Night sweats





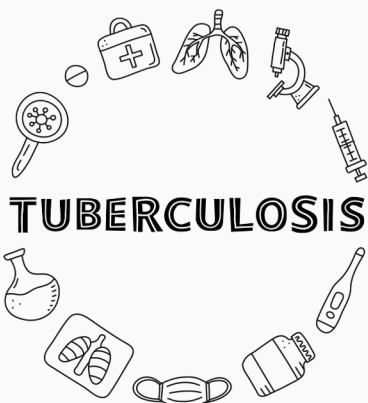
## What treatment will I receive once I am diagnosed?

- You will start with several TB medications.
- You will need to take your medications as prescribed and complete the course of the medication.
- You will need to stay on the TB medication for at least six months



## How can physiotherapy help?

- Persons with an active TB infection in their lungs can benefit from physiotherapy to clear secretions from the lungs.
- Your physiotherapist can assist you with a personal exercise programme to strengthen your breathing muscles and increase your fitness level.
- Treatment for persons with TB of the spine and muscles to relieve symptoms.
- Lifestyle advice to improve overall health.



To find a physiotherapist go to  
[www.saphysio.co.za](http://www.saphysio.co.za)

