

# Infection Control

## Pathogen Primer

### Tuberculosis

#### Tuberculosis (TB) explained

Tuberculosis is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. This bacterium usually attacks the lungs, but can also attack the kidneys, spine, brain, and other parts of the body.

#### How you get sick from Tuberculosis

TB is spread through the air by coughing, sneezing, speaking, or singing. People nearby breathe in the TB particles and become infected. TB is NOT spread through shaking hands, sharing food, touching items, sharing toothbrushes, or kissing. Not everyone that becomes infected with TB actually becomes sick. There are two types of TB infection: latent TB infection and TB disease. Latent TB Infection occurs when someone breathes in TB bacteria but the body's natural immune system is able to stop them from growing. People with latent TB infection do not feel sick, do not show symptoms, and are not infectious. Latent TB Infection can progress into TB Disease if the immune system becomes weakened. TB Disease occurs when the body is not able to stop TB bacteria from growing. These people become sick and can spread TB Disease to others.

#### Information about Tuberculosis

- Symptoms of TB Disease include: bad cough, pain in the chest, coughing up blood, fatigue, loss of appetite, and fever.
- People who have HIV or other health problems, abuse alcohol or drugs, or have had previous cases of TB infection, are at a higher risk of developing TB Disease once infected with TB bacteria.
- A person who has untreated Latent TB Infection can develop TB Disease weeks or years later, if their immune system is weakened.
- Typical treatment for TB Disease includes a drug regimen that is taken for 6 to 9 months. Treatment for Latent TB Infection is a much simpler drug regimen.

#### Other Information

There is a common misconception about the use of tuberculocidal disinfectants in health-care settings. Since TB is not primarily spread through surfaces, but through the air, use of tuberculocidal products will not necessarily aid in preventing the transmission of TB. However, since TB is one of the most difficult pathogens to kill, these products are used as a benchmark, and will be thought to kill numerous other pathogens that are less resistant than TB (such as bloodborne pathogens). For this reason, tuberculocidal disinfectants are typically considered "intermediate-level disinfectants."

#### Disinfectant Products with Tuberculosis Claims.

- Microcide TB



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