

Tuberculosis

In Finland, tuberculosis is a rare disease. Thanks to good treatment, the disease has been nearly eliminated. If you have come from a country where many people suffer from tuberculosis, it is important for your own health and that of your relatives and the people around you to detect a possible tuberculosis disease as early as possible and treat it promptly.

What is tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis is not anybody's fault. Tuberculosis is a communicable disease caused by bacteria. Tuberculosis occurs most often in lungs but it can occur also elsewhere in the body.

How is tuberculosis transmitted?

Tuberculosis is spread from person to person through the air. Tuberculosis bacteria get into the air when a person with pulmonary tuberculosis (tuberculosis of the lungs) speaks, coughs or sings. Other persons staying in the same room may breathe in these bacteria and get infected. Those who have stayed with a sick person for a long time have the highest risk of becoming infected.

Who gets sick with tuberculosis?

Only one in ten persons infected with tuberculosis bacteria develops TB disease. Small under 5-year-old children, young adults, elderly and those whose immune system is weakened are the easiest to become sick.

How quickly can tuberculosis infection develop into a disease?

A small under 5-year-old unvaccinated child can become sick in a couple of weeks or months after being infected, and the disease may progress rapidly. An adult, who does not have any underlying conditions, usually becomes sick within 1-2 years after having been infected. It is possible to become sick with tuberculosis even decades after infection. Therefore remember the symptoms of TB.

What are the symptoms of tuberculosis?

The symptoms of tuberculosis of the lungs are: a cough that lasts over two weeks and coughing up sputum (phlegm from deep in the lungs) or blood. The person with tuberculosis disease may have fever, sweat heavily at night or lose weight without intention.

Where and how is tuberculosis examined?

If tuberculosis of the lungs is suspected, a chest X-ray is taken and sputum samples are examined. Medical evaluation for tuberculosis is started at the reception center or health center. If necessary, further examinations are carried out at hospital.

How is tuberculosis disease treated?

Tuberculosis is treated with medicines. Treatment starts at hospital. In the beginning, there are at least four drugs. The treatment of ordinary tuberculosis takes at least six months. Tuberculosis can be cured if the disease is detected early enough and the treatment is carried out for the required period. Treatment of tuberculosis is good and free of charge in Finland.

For further information : tuberkuloosi.fi/en/

If you have symptoms of tuberculosis or if you suspect that you might have tuberculosis, please inform a public health nurse or other worker at the reception center.

Information regarding your health will not be given to the authorities and will not influence the process of seeking the right for asylum.