

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TUBERCULOSIS

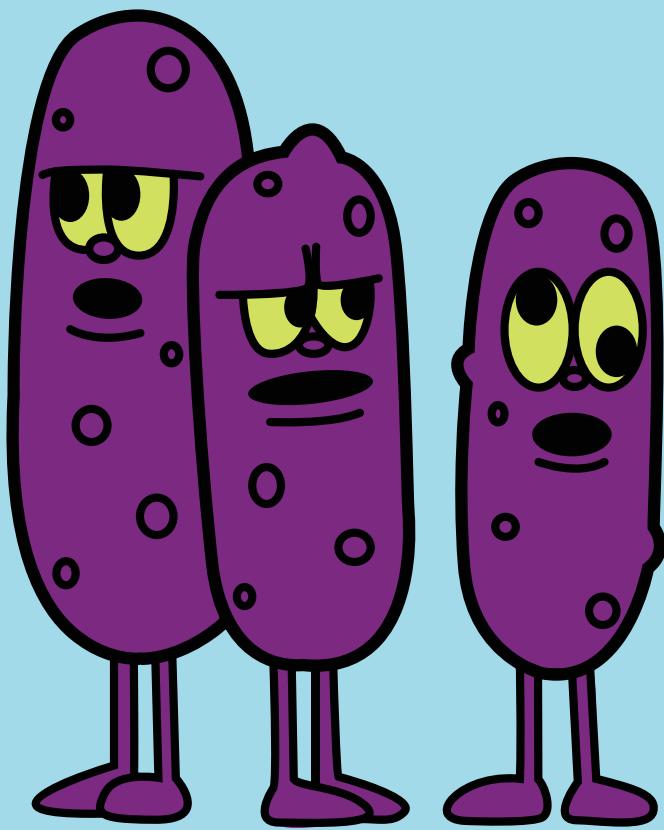




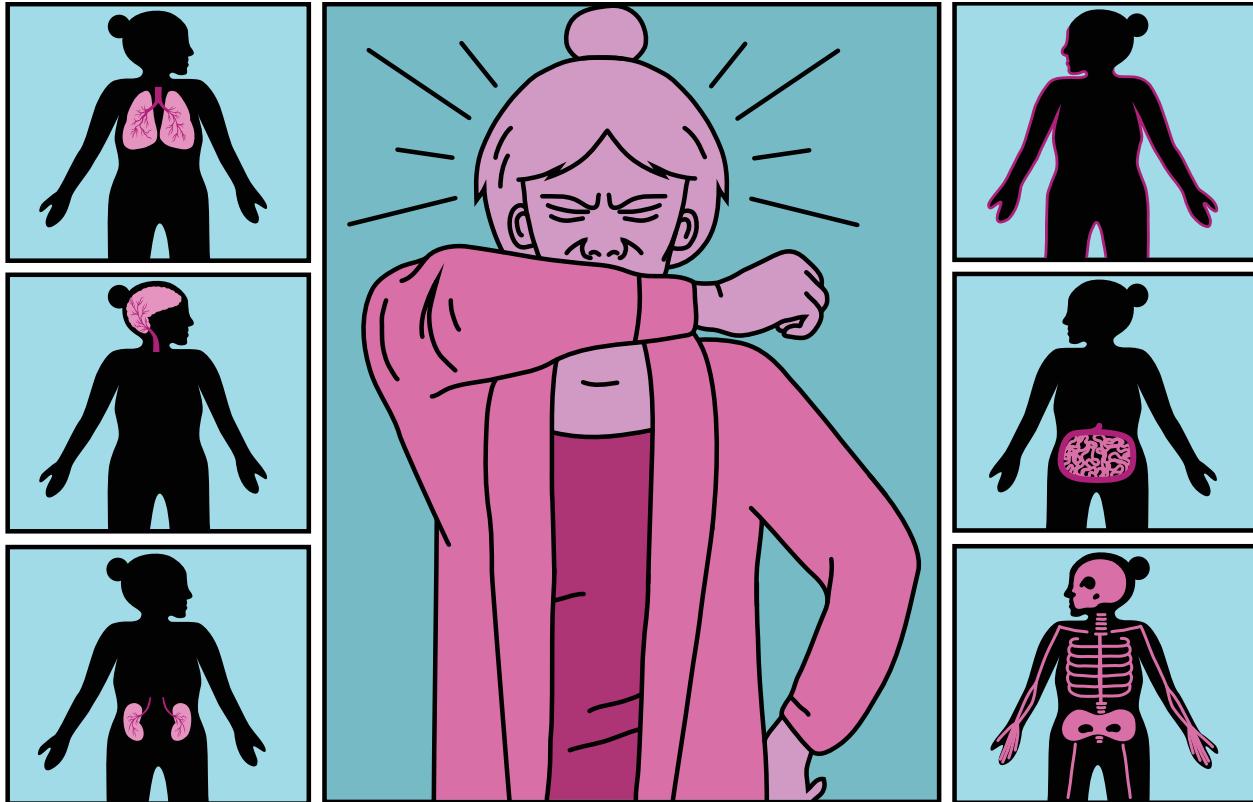
YOUR NAME:

CASE MANAGER'S NAME:

CASE MANAGER'S PHONE NUMBER:



## INTRODUCTION



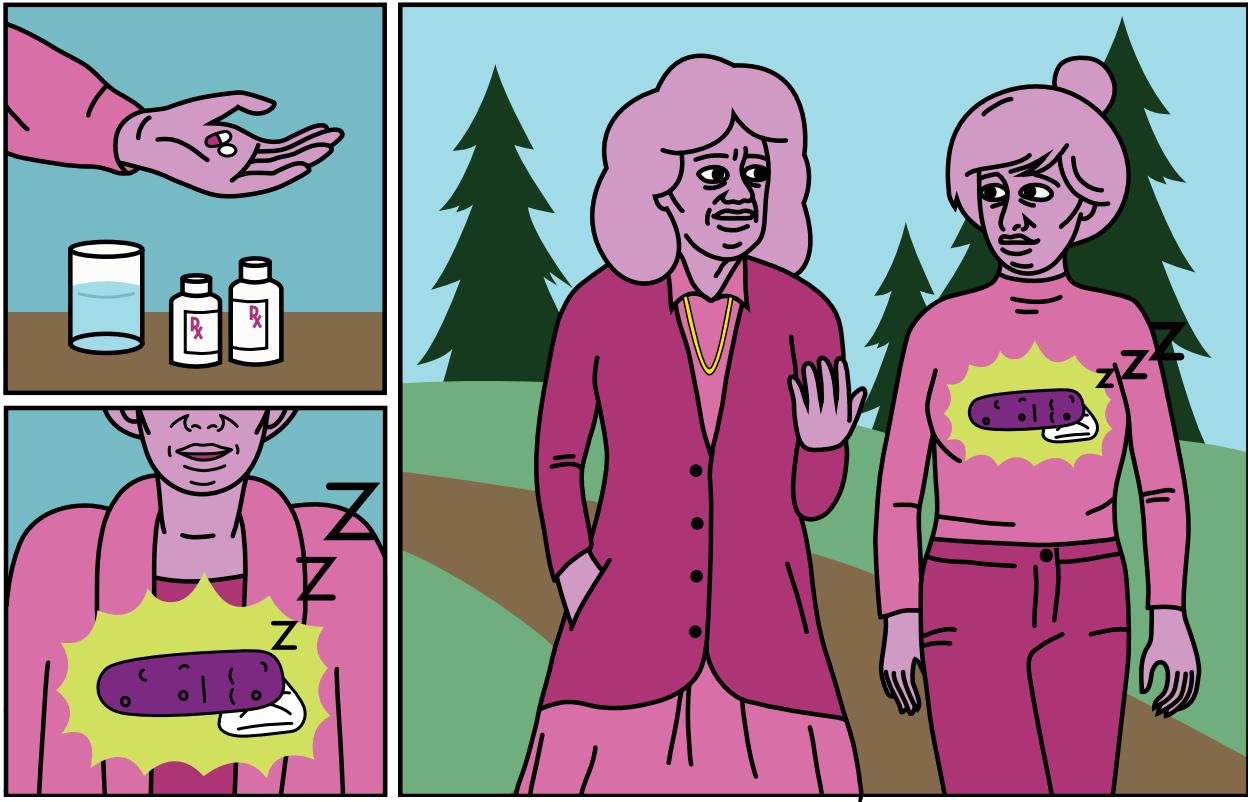
## ABOUT TB

TB stands for Tuberculosis. You may also hear it be called TB Disease. TB Disease is caused by the Tuberculosis germ, which is a kind of bacteria. TB germs can make people sick with TB. Usually TB disease happens in the lungs, but the germ can also make other parts of the body sick too.



## HOW YOU GOT TB

TB is spread through the air. You got the TB germs by breathing them in from someone else, maybe a long time ago. When the TB germs entered your body, your body tried to fight them by building a wall around the germs. When the body builds a wall around the germs we say the TB germs are "asleep", because they cannot hurt your body. When TB germs are "sleeping" it is called latent or inactive TB infection or LTBI.



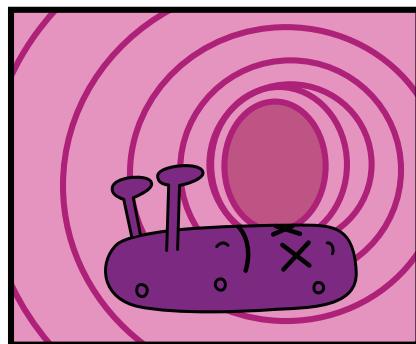
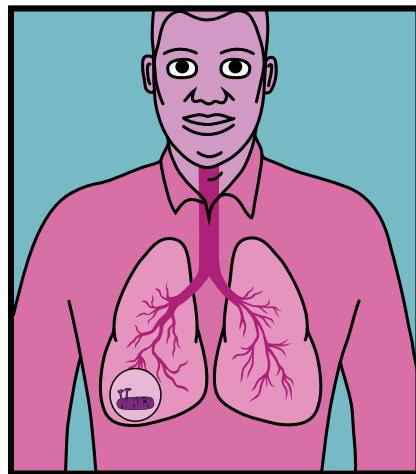
## "SLEEPING" TB GERMS

"Sleeping" germs do not make you feel sick. You cannot give "sleeping" germs to other people. You can kill "sleeping" TB germs by taking pills before the germs "wake up." You are much less likely to get sick if you take the pills while the germs are sleeping.



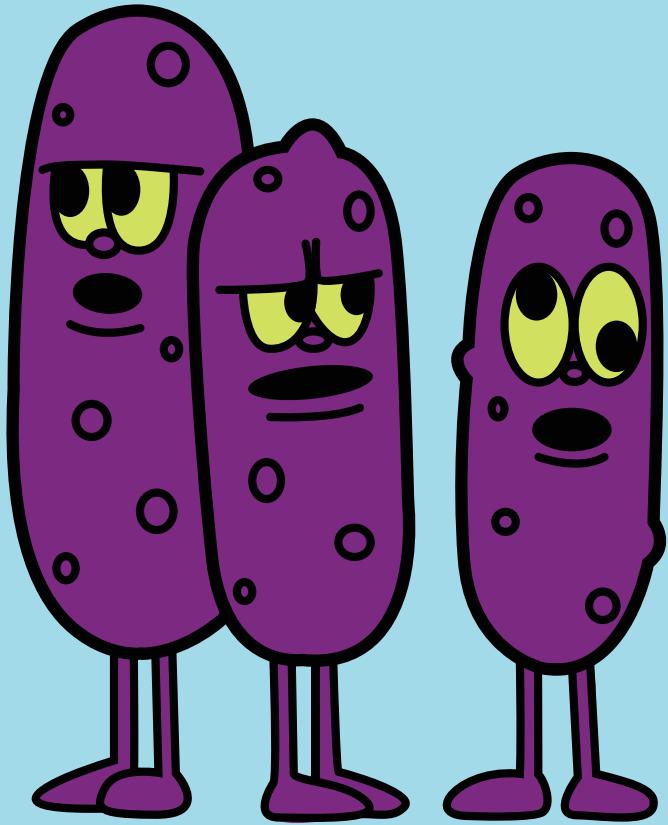
## WHY YOU GOT SICK

You got sick from TB when your body could no longer fight the germs. The germs “woke up” and started to grow and hurt your body. This is called “active TB disease” and this is what makes you feel sick.

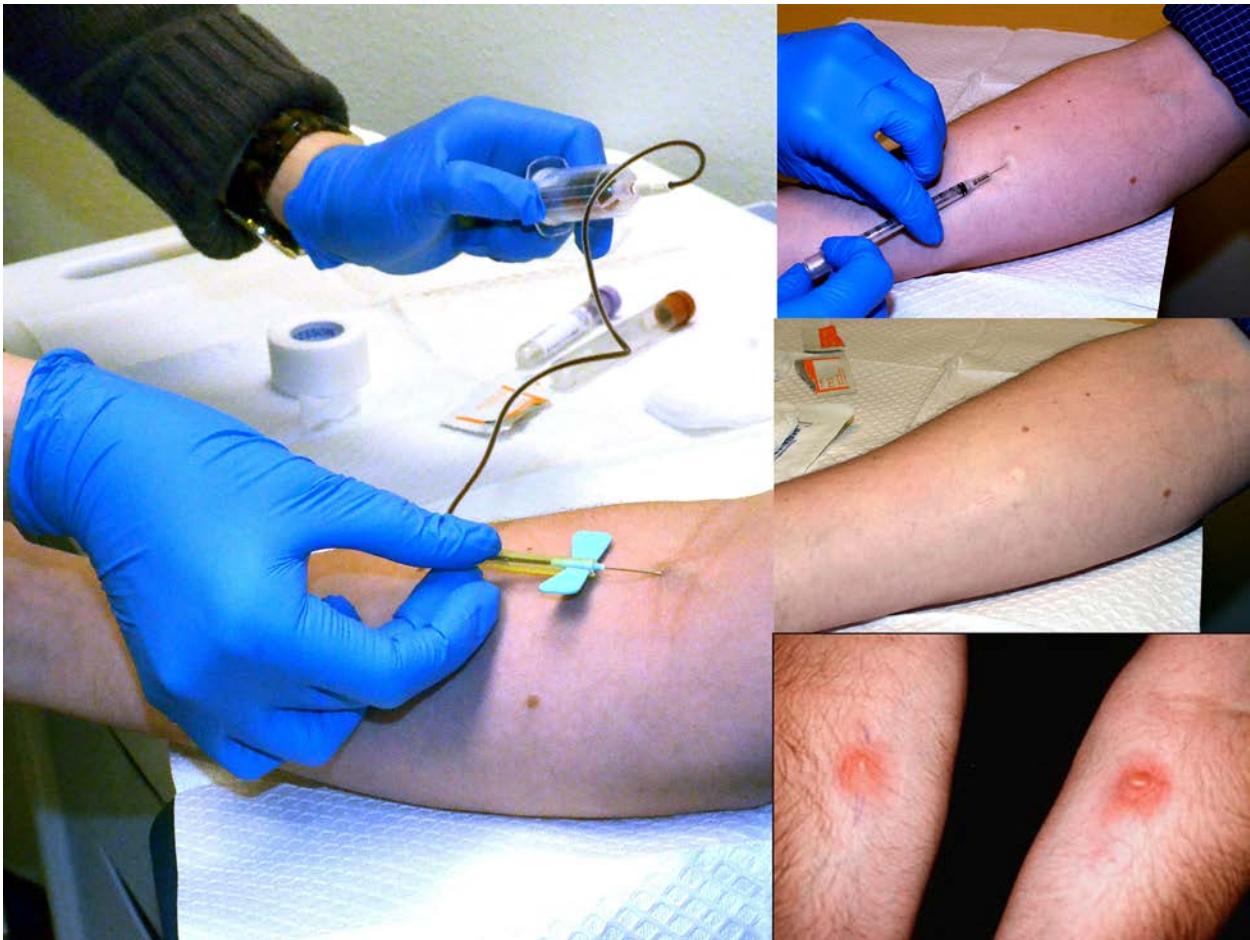


## YOU CAN BE CURED

You need to take pills to cure your TB disease. You also need to take these pills so you don't spread the germs to other people.

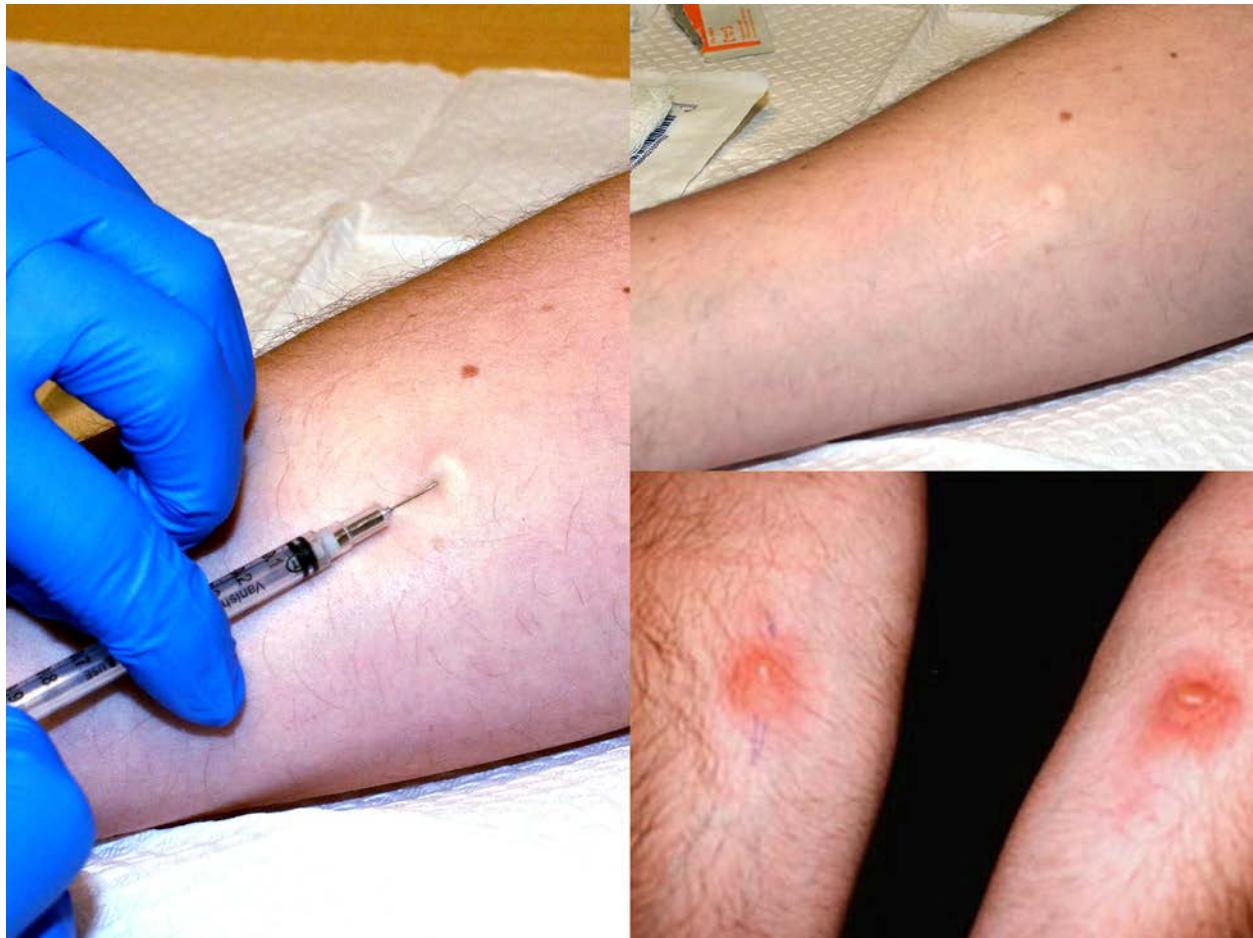


## TESTING FOR TUBERCULOSIS



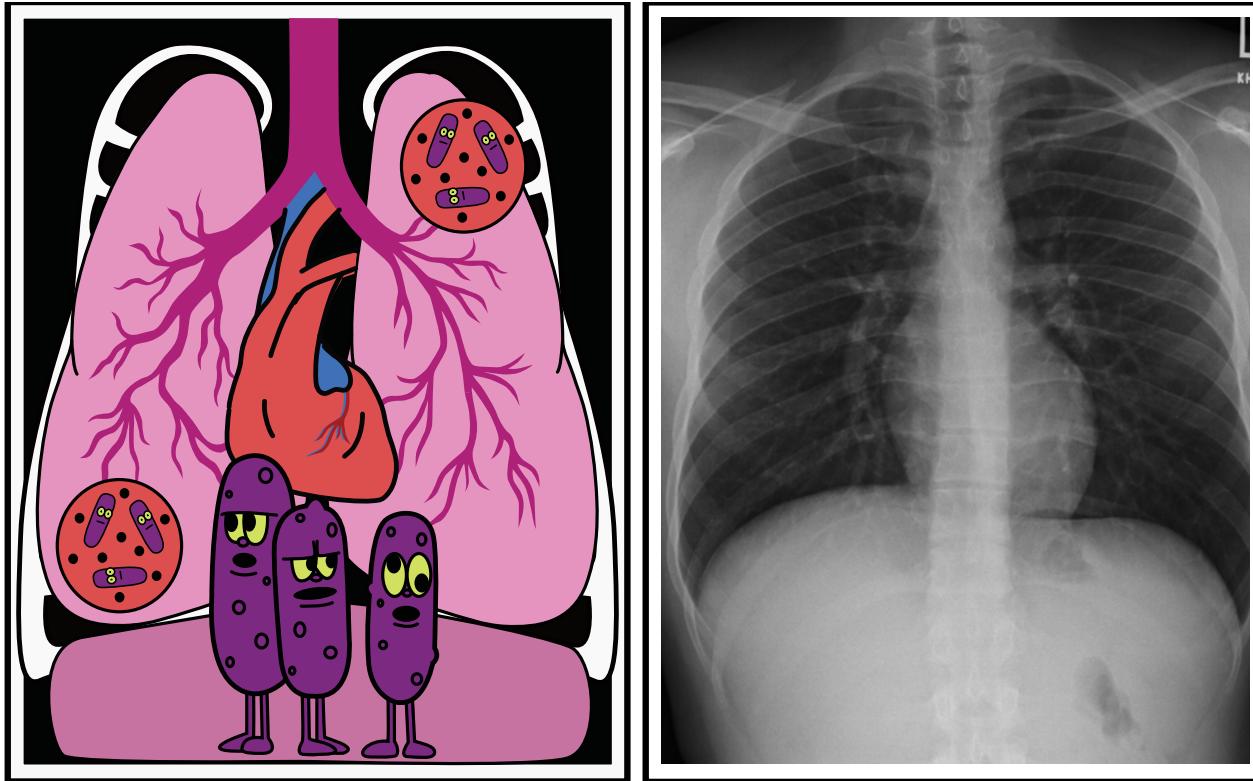
## HOW WE KNOW YOUR GERMS ARE “AWAKE”

There are several tests we do to see if your TB germs are “awake” or “asleep.” You can learn about these tests on the next few pages.



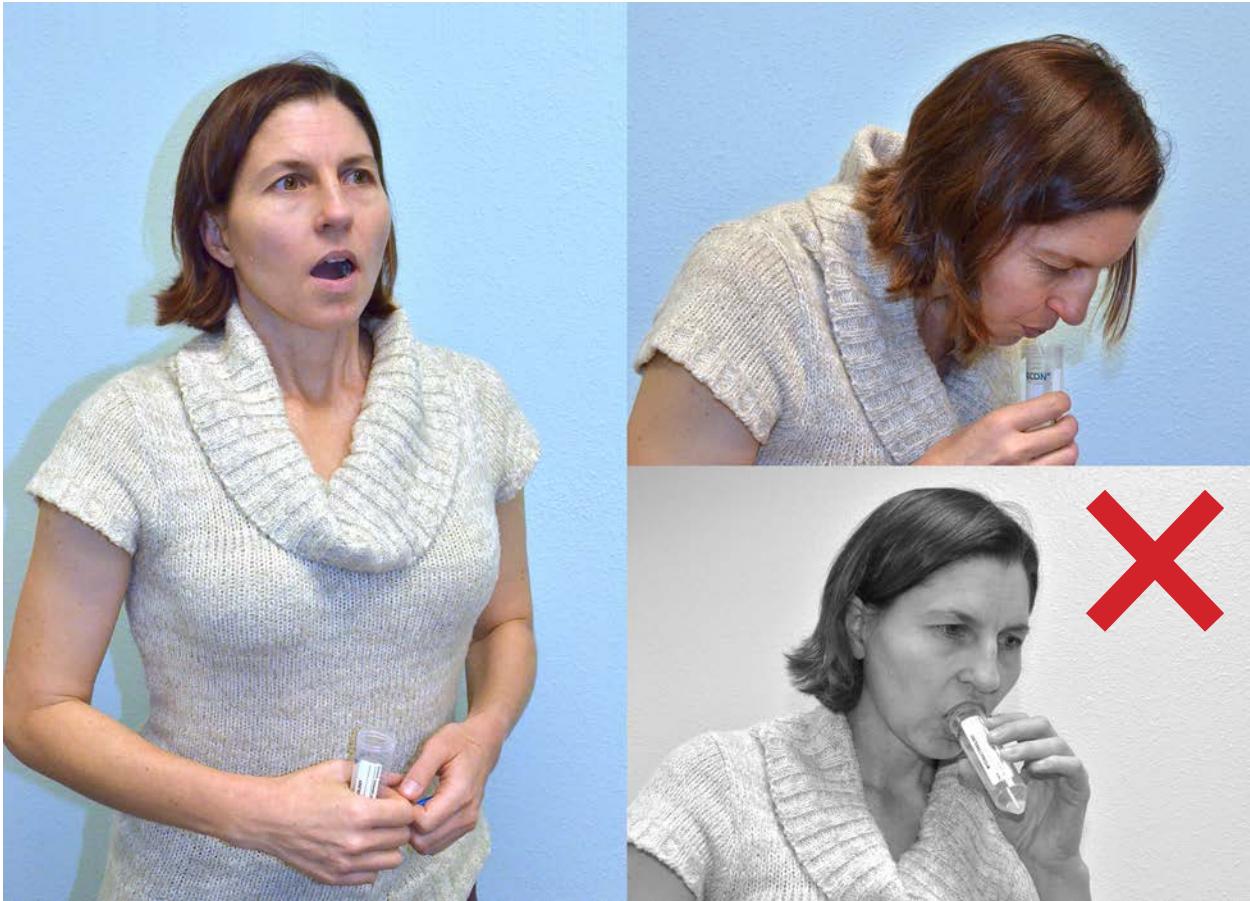
## TB SKIN TEST

The TB skin test tells us if you have had TB germs in your body. This test can also be positive if you have had the BCG vaccine. We usually do a blood test instead of the skin test on people who've had the BCG vaccine or may have had the BCG vaccine.



## CHEST X-RAYS

We do chest x-rays to see if your lungs are healthy or hurt from the TB germs. If the TB germs have hurt your lungs we are usually able to see it on the chest x-ray. We do this because we want to make sure your lungs are okay and it helps us understand how sick you are.

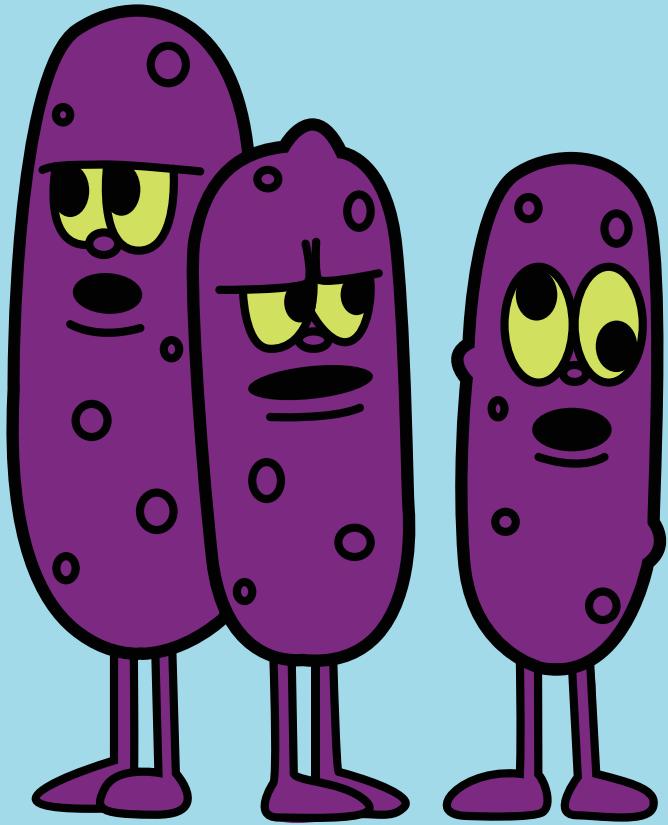


## SPUTUM COLLECTION

The thick fluid you cough up from your lungs is called "sputum." It is not spit or saliva. We test this fluid to see if there are TB germs growing in your lungs.

To collect sputum you will cough the thick fluid up from your lungs into your mouth, and then put it in the tube. Some of the results come back quickly and some of the results take a couple of months to come back.

We will ask you to do this test several days in a row at the beginning of treatment, and then once or twice a month during treatment.



**CASE  
MANAGEMENT**



## CASE MANAGEMENT

Everyone with active TB disease in Multnomah County gets a nurse case manager. This person will work closely with you over several months to:

- Do more tests to make sure your body is handling the TB pills well.
- Do tests to make sure your TB is being cured.
- Talk with your TB doctor about your treatment.
- Give you TB pills at no cost to you.
- Deliver the TB pills to you.

We may have appointments at your house or at the TB clinic.



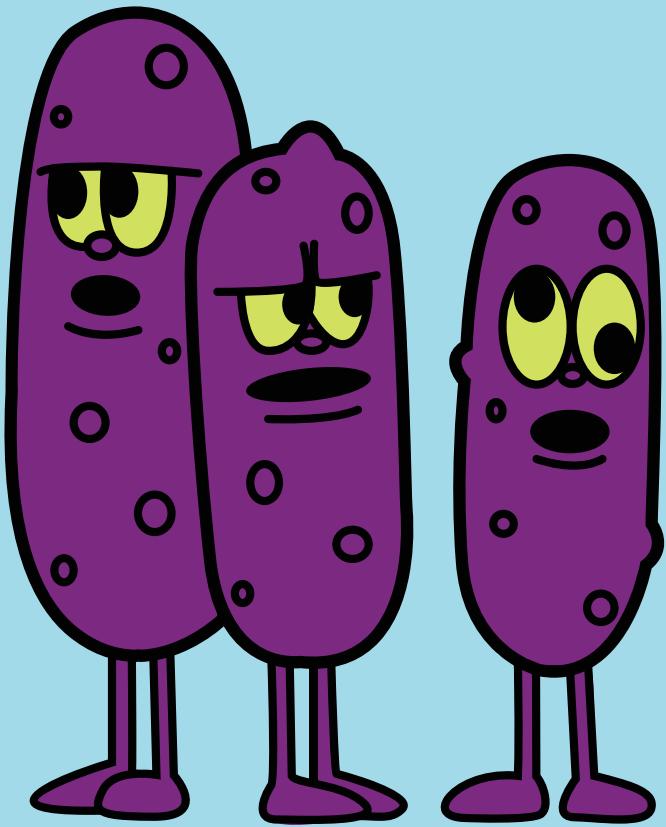
## YOUR TB DOCTOR

We will work with your doctor on your treatment plan. If you do not have a doctor, you may see our TB doctor. You will see the nurse case manager once a month and you will also have regular appointments with a doctor.



## MONTHLY APPOINTMENTS

We will schedule monthly check-ups with you to make sure you are getting better. Your nurse case manager will come back to your house to meet with you each month. Once you can no longer spread the germs to others you can also come to the clinic for your appointments.

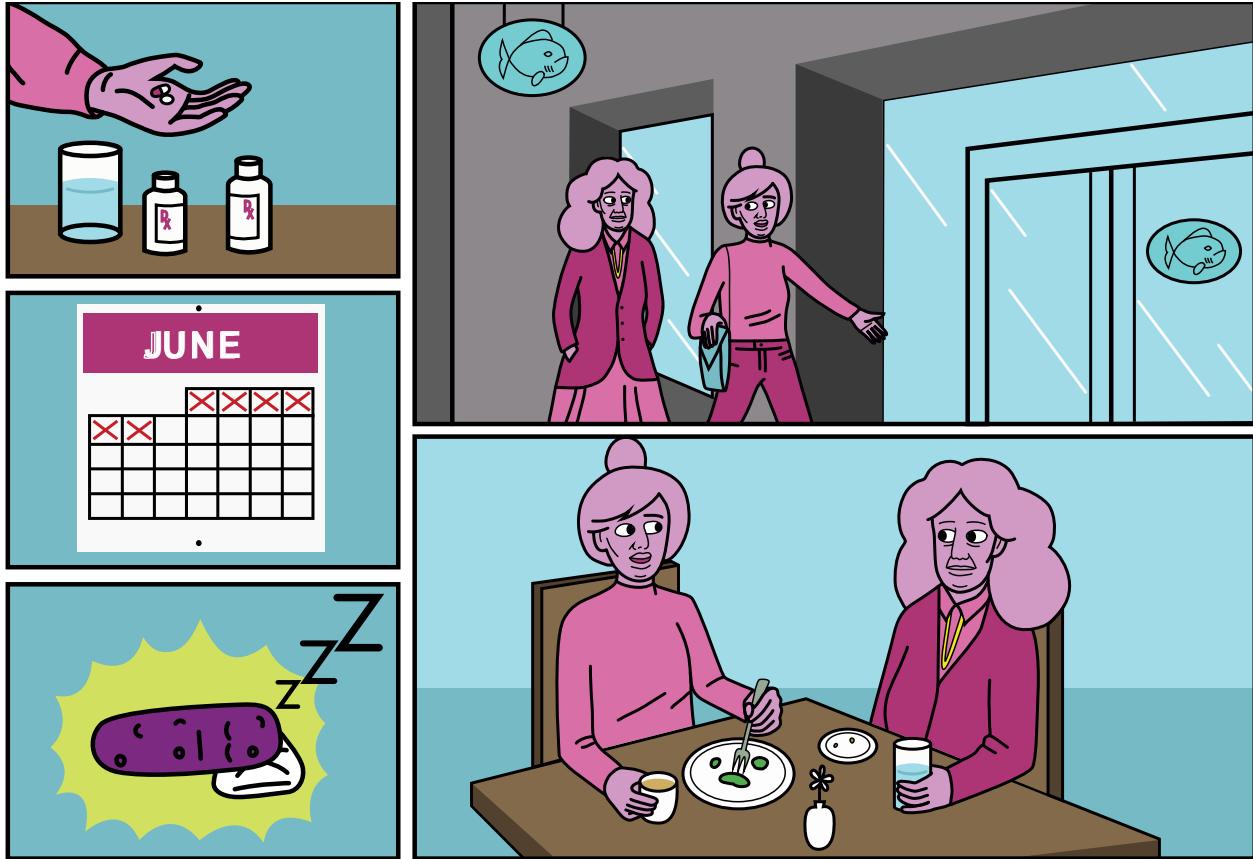


**MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT TUBERCULOSIS**



## MORE ABOUT YOUR TB DISEASE

TB disease is not common in Oregon. It is very serious but also curable. TB disease can be cured by taking pills for several months. You will probably feel better a few weeks after you start taking your pills.



## KEEPING OTHERS HEALTHY

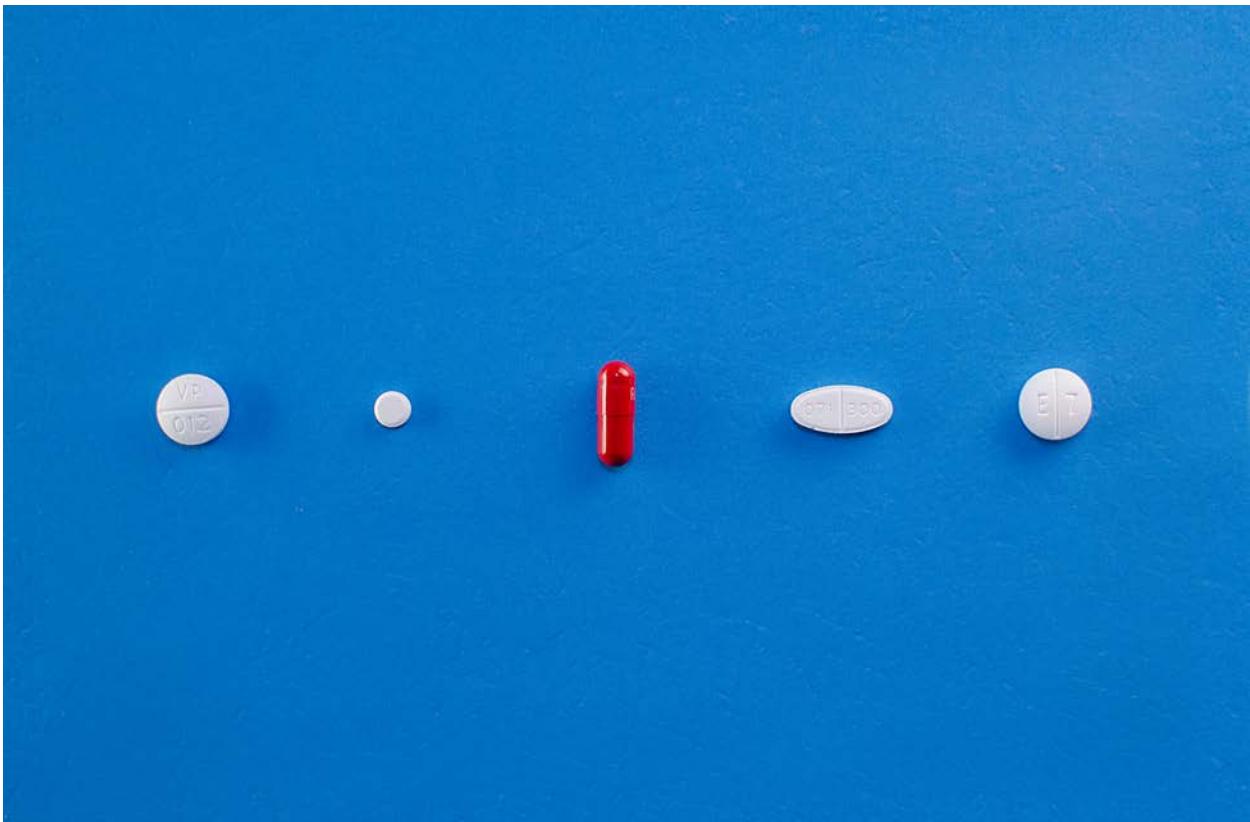
Until the pills start working in your body, you can give your TB to other people. It can spread when you cough, sneeze, talk or sing. You cannot get TB from shaking hands or from sharing food, dishes or other things. You got the disease from someone sick with TB, possibly a long time ago. It is important to stay away from people while you can still spread the germs.



## KEEPING OTHERS HEALTHY

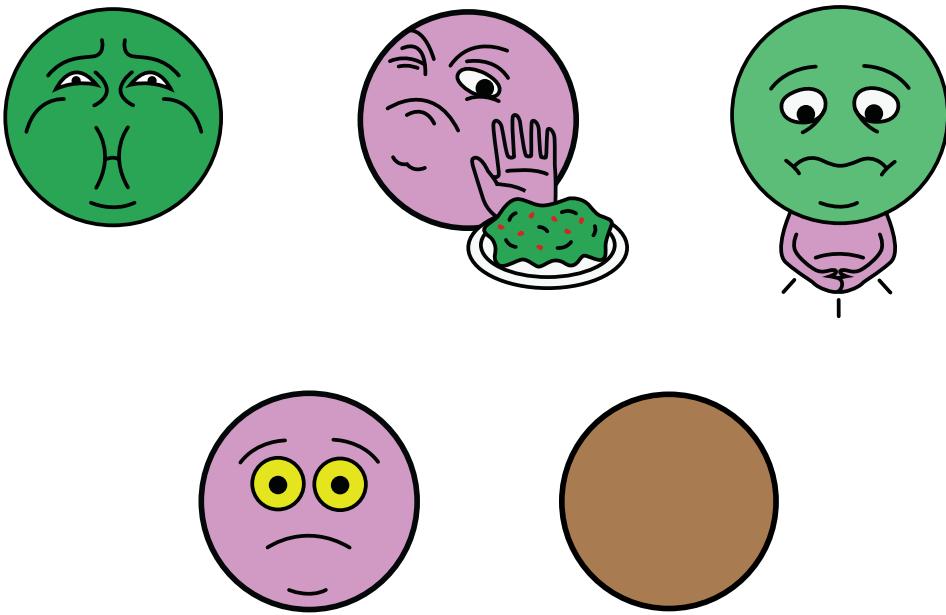
We want to make sure other people don't get sick so we are asking you to stay home, away from people while you can still spread TB germs to people. This is called isolation. We will work hard to get you out of isolation as soon as possible. We will tell you when it is okay to leave home.

During your isolation you should not go to work or school. You should not go to public places like grocery stores or religious services. You should not visit friends or family member's houses or have people to your home who do not live there.



## PILL PLAN

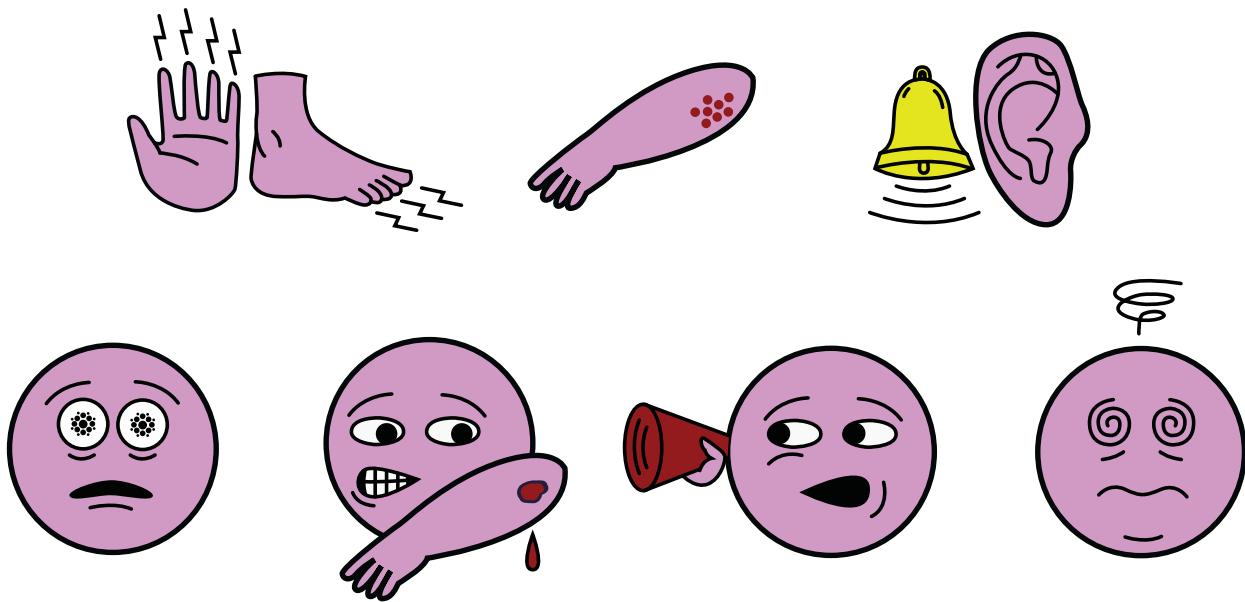
- You will be taking these pills for at least six to nine months, or possibly as long as 12 to 18 months.
- Refer to your "Pill Sheet" for your customized treatment and instructions on how to take your pills on the weekends by yourself.



## SIDE EFFECTS

You might have problems from the TB pills. If you do, we want to know about it. Call your nurse case manager if you have any of these, or any other symptom that is new.

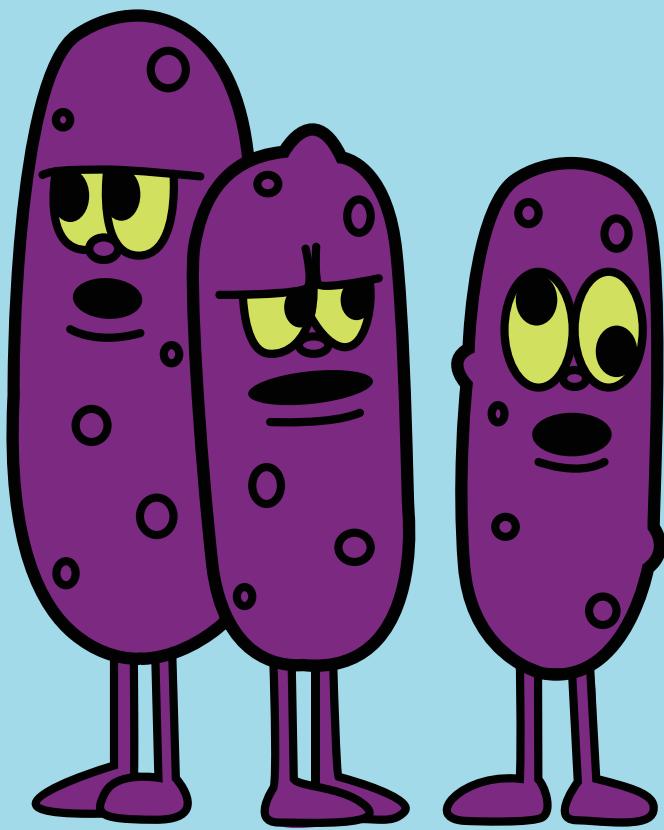
- unexplained tiredness
- nausea
- vomiting
- lack of appetite
- stomach pain
- yellow eyes or skin
- dark urine



## SIDE EFFECTS

Call your nurse case manager if you have any of these, or any other symptom that is new.

- rash or itching
- tingling/numbness in hands or feet
- changes in vision / blurry vision
- joint pain
- headaches or dizziness
- hearing loss / ringing in your ears
- unusual bruising or bleeding



**TAKING  
PILLS**

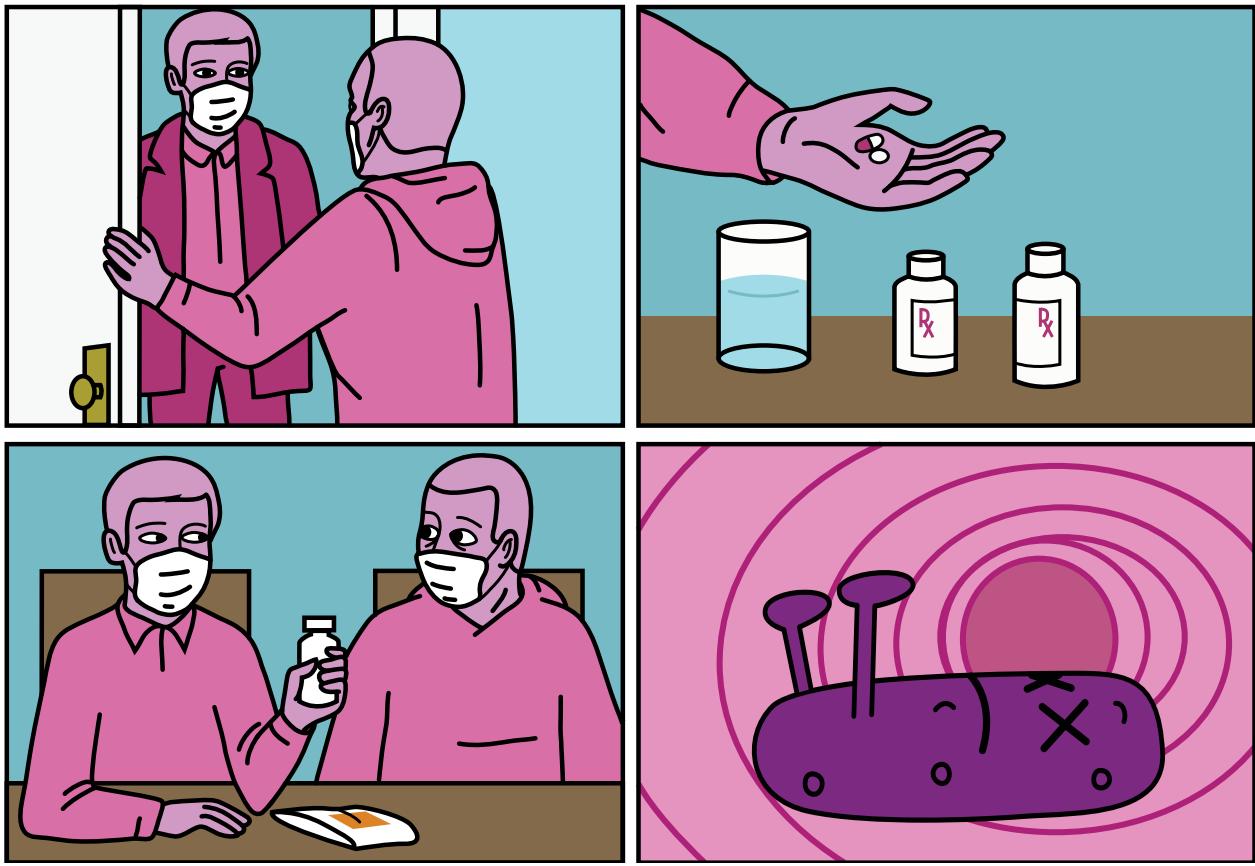


## DIRECTLY OBSERVED THERAPY

TB germs are strong, so the TB pills take a long time to work. We know it can be hard to take so many pills each day for many months, so we are here to help you through your treatment.

A Multnomah County Community Health Worker will bring your pills to you each day, Monday through Friday. They will ask you how you are feeling and watch you take your pills. This is called "Directly Observed Therapy." On Fridays they will give you extra TB pills for the weekend.

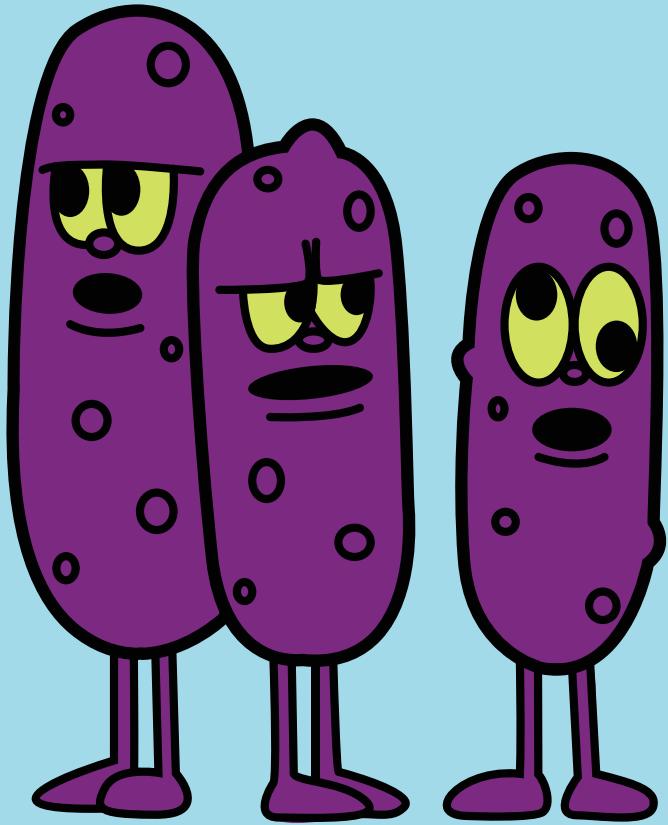
The Community Health Worker can also help you contact your nurse case manager if you have questions.



## WHY WE BRING YOU THE PILLS

We bring the TB pills to you because this is the best way to make sure you get all the medicine you need and to make sure the medicine is working. This also helps us know if there is a problem with your pills so we can fix it right away.

Watching patients take their TB pills every day is normal. Everyone does this, all over the world.



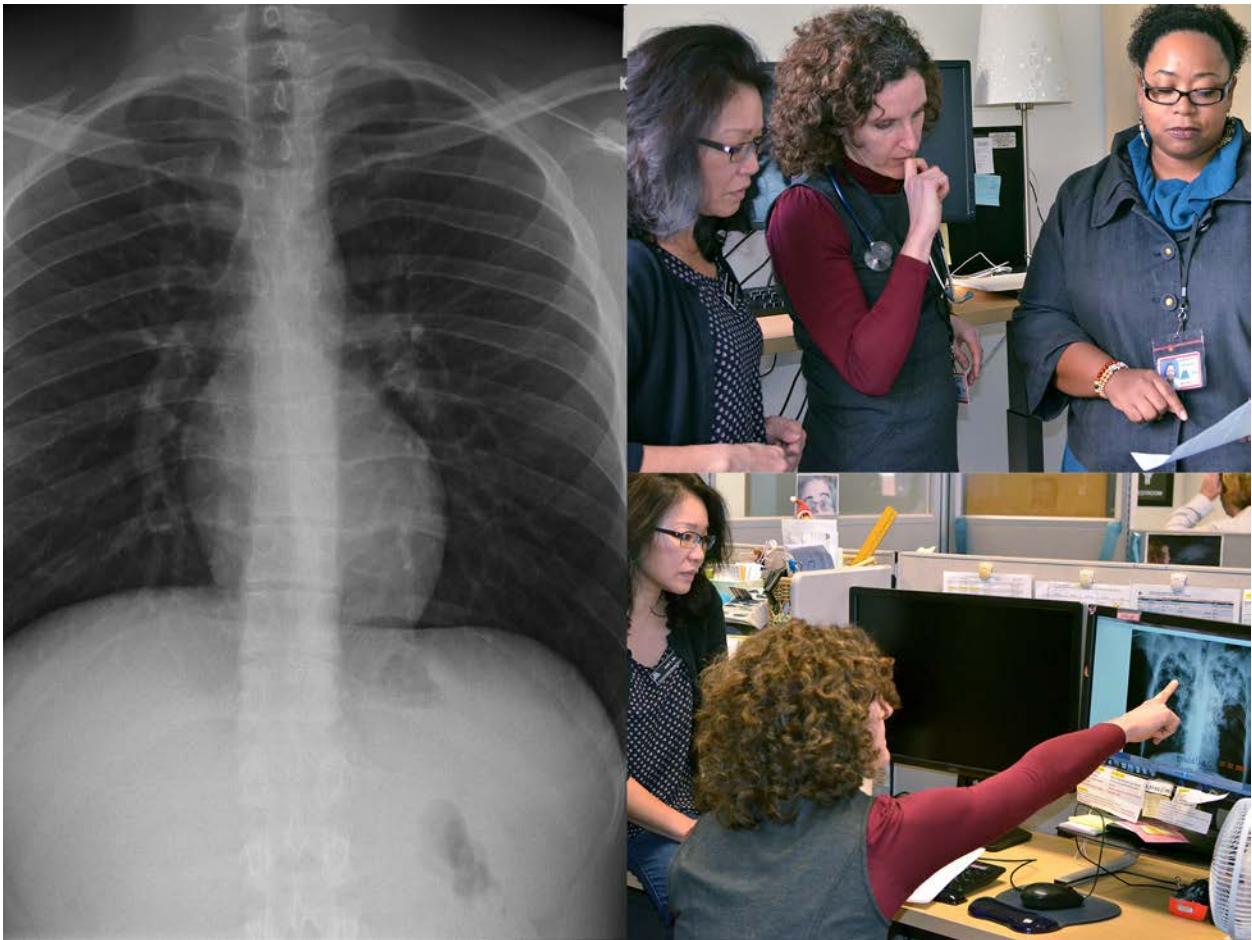
## **ADDITIONAL TESTS**



## MORE TESTS DURING YOUR TREATMENT

We will tell you when you can no longer spread the germs to other people. We will know this by doing more tests. We may ask you to cough up sputum and put it into a tube for testing. This will help us know if you can still spread the germs to other people.

When we test your sputum we give it a score from zero to four. A four means you can easily spread the TB germs to other people. A zero means you are unlikely to spread it to others. Once you get three sputum tests in a row that score a zero, then you can come off isolation and return to your normal activities.



## MORE TESTS DURING YOUR TREATMENT

We will also do more chest X-rays. We usually do this after two months and again at the end of your treatment. This helps us understand if your lungs are healing.



## RETURNING TO ACTIVITIES

Our TB doctor will tell you when you can return to work, school, or other activities.

After you have been on daily pills for a couple months, you may be able to take fewer pills or take pills less often. We will tell you if you can do that.



## CONTACT INVESTIGATION

Soon we will test your family and other people who you spend a lot of time with to see if they have TB. If they do have TB germs, but are not yet sick, they will be offered pills to cure the "sleeping" TB germs and make sure they don't get sick. Over the next few weeks we will ask you some questions about your family and people close to you so we can decide how to help your family and friends.

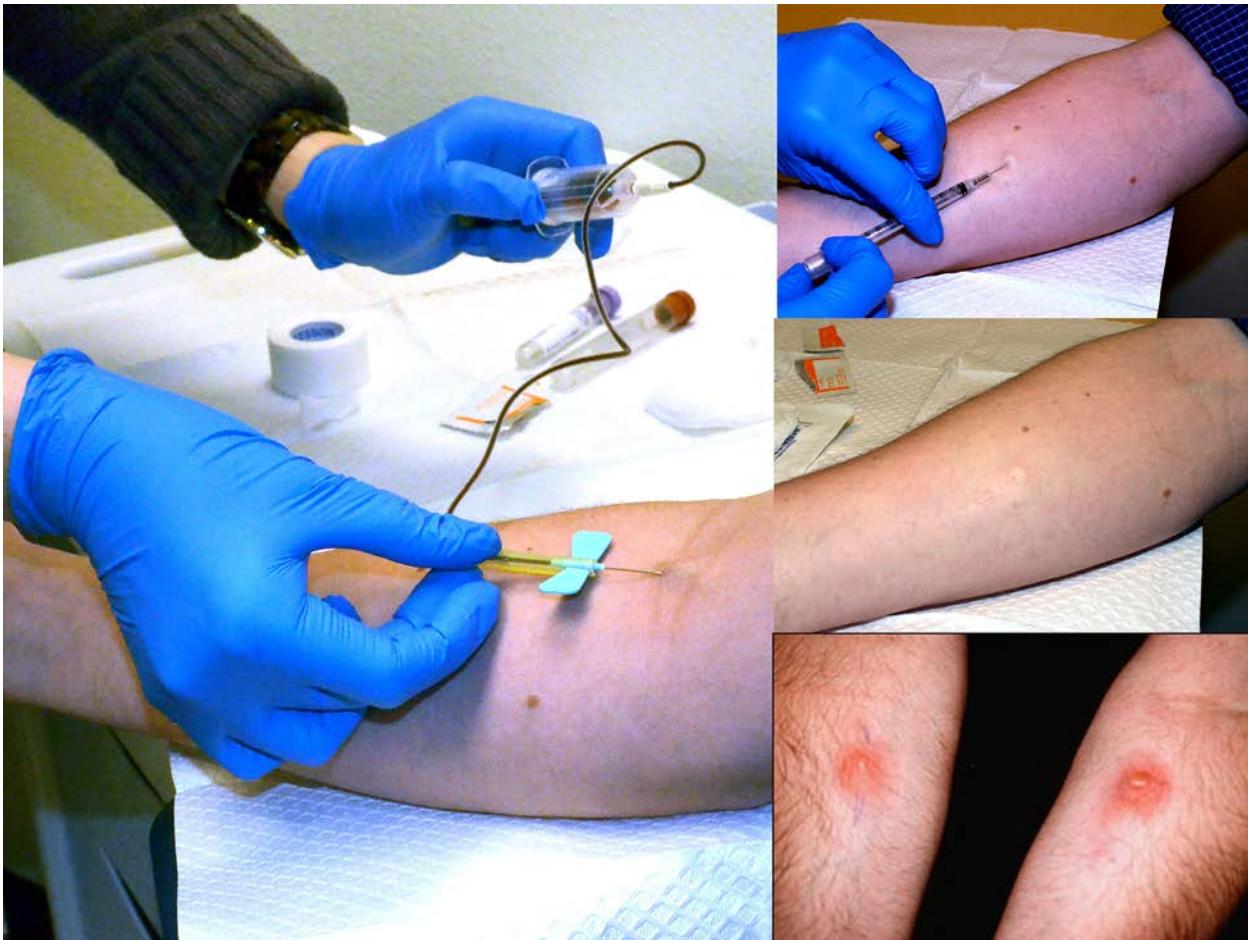
These questions might be:

- How many people live with you?
- Are there any children under five years old in the household?
- Is there anyone in the household with an immune system problem?
- What do you do for work?
- If a child in your family has TB, where does your child go to school and how does your child get to school?
- Is there anyone in the household with a cough, fever or weight loss?



## YOUR TREATMENT SUMMARY

- Your nurse case manager will bring you pills every day.
- Your nurse case manager will visit you once a month to see how you are doing. We may ask you to cough sputum in the tube once a month.
- Your community health worker or nurse case manager will pick up the tubes.
- We will ask you to get another chest x-ray in two months.
- We will work with your doctor to provide you the care you need.
- You may need blood tests if you have a problem or just to make sure the pills are not causing a problem.
- You can call your nurse case manager if you have a question or problem.



## LAB TESTS

Here is some information about lab tests we do on your blood:

- QuantiFERON Gold test helps us learn more about the TB germs in your body.
- A Complete Blood Count (CBC) helps us learn if you have a healthy amount of all the different types of cells in your blood. This tells us about your general health.
- A Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP) helps us know if your kidneys and liver are working well so they can handle the TB pills.
- We will do an HIV test to make sure we are treating your TB the right way.
- HIV can change the way your body responds to the TB pills.

# NOTES



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**About The Multnomah County Health Department's  
Communicable Diseases Services Program**

*The Communicable Diseases Services program directly provides services that limit the spread of life-threatening infectious diseases. We conduct investigations that find people who have been exposed to serious diseases to make sure they can get the information and the care they need to stay healthy. To prevent these diseases before they start, we work with communities to provide education and screening. For people who already have diseases like TB, we assure access to medicine. Through our work, we strive to be a trusted community resource, promoting and protecting the health of individuals and communities in collaboration with community partners.*



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