

Infectious Diseases

Series

1



TUBERCULOSIS



TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bacteria usually attack the lungs. But, TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain. Among infectious diseases, TB remains the second leading killer of adults in the world, with more than 2 million TB-related deaths each year. TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The bacteria are put into the air when a person with active TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, or sings. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected. Many people who have latent (inactive) TB infection never develop active TB disease. In these people, the TB bacteria remain inactive for a lifetime without causing disease. But in other people, especially people who have weak immune systems, the bacteria become active and cause TB disease. People with latent TB infection can take medication so that they will not develop active disease. If they don't take this treatment, they can go on to develop active TB disease. Active TB disease requires treatment with multiple drugs, but it can be cured.