

HIV/LTBI - Info & Facts

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious health threat, especially for people living with HIV (PLWH). They are more likely to become sick with TB than others. Worldwide, TB is one of the leading causes of death among PLWH. If left untreated, approximately 5%–10% of people with latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) will progress to TB disease during their lifetime. Moreover, the incidence of TB among PLWH is 10 times higher than those who are not infected with HIV.

All individuals should be tested for LTBI at the time of HIV diagnosis, regardless of their TB risk category, recommended by the medical guidelines. To know whether you have LTBI, you need to conduct a LTBI test in medical institutions. Health care workers will help you to draw 4~5 c.c. of blood sample, and the test result can be available within 2 weeks.

If the test result is positive, it means that you have been infected with TB, and the health care workers will arrange for you to undergo a chest X-ray examination to confirm that there is not active TB. After evaluation by a doctor, the hospital will provide you with a full course of LTBI treatment. The market price of the LTBI test is about 3,000 NTD at its own expense, and the treatment is about 7,000 NTD. Now the HIV/AIDS-designated hospitals offer free LTBI test and treatment services at public expense, thus you only need to pay the registration fee of hospitals.

Finally, I would like to suggest you to know your LTBI status. Individuals with LTBI are not infectious but they have lifetime risk to develop TB diseases that require longer duration and bring more side effects of TB treatment. Please visit HIV/AIDS-designated hospitals and/or contact with your HIV case managers. They will help you to arrange the LTBI test and provide you treatment appropriately.