

認識結核病的問與答-英文

About tuberculosis: Q&A

How is tuberculosis transmitted?

Ans : Tuberculosis is mainly transmitted via air and droplets. Contagious tuberculosis patients will spread the bacteria wrapped in their secretions via coughing, sneezing, talking, singing, etc., into the air. When healthy people inhale the bacteria, they will be infected. Tuberculosis is not transmitted via food. Therefore, the tableware used by tuberculosis patients does not need to be sterilized. In addition, patients diagnosed with “extra-pulmonary tuberculosis” are not contagious and will not spread the infection to other people. For patients diagnosed with tuberculosis, they can be categorized into two types, active tuberculosis and latent tuberculosis infection. Active tuberculosis means that mycobacterium tuberculosis is contained in the phlegm. Before taking any medication, other people may be infected. Latent tuberculosis means that no mycobacterium tuberculosis is contained in the phlegm, and it is not contagious.

Can tuberculosis be cured? What are the precautions during the treatment?

Ans : Now, with the advancements in pharmacy, tuberculosis can be cured by proper treatment and medication. If tuberculosis patients cooperate with their doctor and health agencies to take medicine and keep follow-up visits regularly, they can work or go to school as normal. Normally, it takes 6 months to complete a regular treatment. Nevertheless, the doctor may extend the treatment time depending on the patient's conditions to ensure the patient's recovery.

It is suggested that patients with active tuberculosis rest at home in the first 2 weeks of taking medicine as much as possible. Practicing DOTS when taking medication, patients are suggested to wear face masks at medical grade or above and avoid going to crowded places. After taking medicine for 2 weeks or the phlegm is tested negative, they can resume their normal life.

How can I protect people around me against tuberculosis?

Ans : To avoid infecting people around you, tuberculosis patients should take medicine regularly prescribed by doctors and maintain good personal hygiene. For example, they should cover their mouth and nose with handkerchiefs or tissues when sneezing or coughing. The sputum coughed up should be wrapped up in toilet paper and flushed down the toilet. Indoor areas should be kept ventilated.

What is DOTS?

Ans : The purpose of DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course) is to ensure each patient suffering from tuberculosis will take each of the pills according to prescription with the help and under the supervision of medical and public health personnel and trained DOTS caregivers. They also give patients care and help evaluate patients if there is any side effect after taking medicine so that patients can complete the treatment. This practice is regarded as the realization of the spirit of “delivering



medicine to the patient, seeing to it that the patient takes the medicine, and leaving after the patient has taken the medicine ” to prevent the antibiotic-resistant bacteria. It is also an effective way to safeguard the general public and prevent the disease from spreading.

If migrant workers are diagnosed with tuberculosis, can they still stay in Taiwan to seek medical attention?

Ans : If migrant workers are diagnosed with tuberculosis or tuberculosis pleurisy (excluding multidrug-resistant tuberculosis), their employers should apply for DOTS to municipal, county (city) health authorities by submitting the “certificate of diagnosis” and “Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course (DOTS) Consent Form for Foreign Employee” within 15 days from the next day of the receipt of the certificate of diagnosis, and migrant workers can then stay in Taiwan for treatment. If migrant workers are unable to cooperate with DOTS for 15 days (inclusive) or longer or are diagnosed with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in a later period, local health departments will issue letters to refuse the filing for recordation and inform the Ministry of Labor (to suspend employment permit) and the National Immigration Agency, Ministry of the Interior (to note entry prohibited). When migrant workers complete treatment with DOTS and are verified by municipal, county (city) health authorities for completing treatment, they can be regarded as passing their health check.

Should contacts of tuberculosis patients get health checks?

Ans : When an individual has been confirmed to have tuberculosis, health personnel will help conduct an evaluation. People meeting the following criteria should receive a contact health check:

1. Co-inhabitants of tuberculosis patients;
2. People that have contact with tuberculosis patients for 8 hours (inclusive) or more per day during the contagious period for a total of 40 hours (inclusive) or more;
3. Persons with the necessity of receiving medical tests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

How to protect yourself when being around tuberculosis patients?

Ans : Now, with the advancements in pharmacy, the results of tuberculosis drugs have been highly satisfactory.

If tuberculosis patients take medicine regularly, they will be minimally contagious. Therefore, the best way to protect yourself is to pay attention to patients to see if they take medicine regularly or not. If you have prolonged contact with a tuberculosis patient, you should cooperate with health agencies to take CXR test. In addition, you should also take the LBTI test on the basis of the sputum contagion of the TB patients. If the test result is positive, collaborate with the health authorities for referral to LBTI assessment and treatment for the protection of your own health and prevent the act on of TB. If you pass the health check and the patient takes medicine regularly, you do not have to worry about being infected. It is also important to keep indoor areas ventilated, maintain good hygiene habits, and practice cough etiquette.

