

# For Pregnant People and New Parents

Answering your  
questions about  
Tuberculosis (TB)



**TB disease** can make you and your baby very sick, but it is preventable. It is important to protect you and your family. Talk to your health care provider about getting tested and taking medication if needed.

**TB is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. It spreads from person to person through the air.**

**TB Disease:** People with TB disease have active TB bacteria in their body that make them sick and can be spread to others. Symptoms include 3+ weeks of coughing, weight loss, fever, night sweats or extreme tiredness. TB disease can be deadly if not treated.

**Latent TB Infection (LTBI):** LTBI is a “hidden” infection caused by TB bacteria. People with LTBI do not feel sick and cannot spread TB to others. But the infection can become TB disease over time if they do not take TB prevention medication.

**?** If you have had a **positive** TB skin test or blood test during pregnancy or spent time with a person with active TB disease, you may have questions.

## **1 How do I know if I have TB or LTBI?**

Even if you do not feel sick, **ask your doctor or health care provider about a medical exam to see if you have TB. This may include a blood test and a chest x-ray.**

## **2 Is there a TB vaccine? Will it protect my baby?**

**There is a TB vaccine (“BCG”), but it does not provide long-term protection against TB.** If you were born outside of the U.S. and received the BCG vaccine, ask your health care provider for the TB blood test.

## **3 Is it OK to get a chest x-ray when I am pregnant?**

A chest x-ray is very important to find out if you have TB disease. **The amount of radiation to the baby during a chest x-ray is small and is considered safe in pregnancy.** You will be provided a body shield during the x-ray for added protection. Speak to your health care provider about any questions or concerns you have.

## **4 Do I need TB medication while I am pregnant and do not feel sick?**

**If you test positive, talk to your health care provider about next steps that might include medication.** For some people, starting medication is recommended during pregnancy. For others, medication can wait until after the baby is born.

## **5 Will TB medication harm my baby if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?**

**TB medications are usually safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding.** Ask your health care provider about the safety of your medications.

## **6 How can I protect myself and my loved ones against TB?**

**Talk to your family about getting a TB test if they:**

- Were born or lived in Africa, Asia, Mexico, Central or South America, the Caribbean or Eastern Europe for one month or longer
- Have a weakened immune system
- Lived with or spent time with someone sick with TB



**TBfreeCalifornia.org**

