

**Louisiana Pharmacists Association**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Tuberculosis**

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious infectious disease that primarily affects your lungs. TB is spread from one person to another via air droplets when people with lung TB cough, sneeze, laugh or spit. The chances of getting infected with TB bacteria are highest in people who are in close proximity with other infected individuals which include but are not limited to: family and friends of an infected individual, persons who have immigrated from areas of the world where TB is prevalent, people with weak immune system (HIV/AIDS patients, organ transplant recipients, cancer patients, and patients on immunosuppressant drugs). The two types of tuberculosis conditions are latent TB infection (LTBI) and active TB disease.

**Latent TB:** Although the infected individual may be infected with tuberculosis bacteria (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) they will not be ill and they cannot transmit the disease. People with LTBI may possess the following attributes: have no symptoms, no sickness, not contagious, may have a positive TB skin or blood test, and may develop the TB disease (if they do not receive proper treatment in a timely matter). Many people with latent TB may never develop TB disease as the bacteria remains inactive for a lifetime; however, people with weak immune system have a higher risk of the bacteria becoming active and causing TB disease.

**Active TB disease:** Active TB disease is when the TB bacteria become active and starts

multiplying and your immune system can't stop them from growing. People with active lung tuberculosis disease show symptoms of bad cough that can last 3 weeks or more. They may also possess the following symptoms: sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever and night sweats, sickness, positive skin and blood test indicating TB disease, abnormal chest x-ray, positive sputum smear or culture. TB disease can be detected through a skin test (TST) or a TB blood test. The skin test is performed by injecting a small amount of fluid called tuberculin into the skin in the arm. The patient must then return to the clinic within 3 to 5 days to have a healthcare worker estimate the dimensions of the bump and tell the patient if their reaction is positive or negative. If it's positive, it usually means the patient has been infected with the TB bacteria. The TB blood test detects how the immune system reacts to the TB bacteria. A positive TB skin or blood test does not tell you whether you have latent TB infection or TB disease. In order to diagnose the type of TB other tests such as a chest x-ray and sputum sample are needed.

Treatments are dependent on whether the patient has the latent TB infection (LTBI) or active TB disease. LTBI is most commonly treated for 6 to 9 months with isoniazid (INH) as a preventative therapy. Active TB disease is treated with several drugs for 6 to 12 months that includes: Rifampin (RIF), isoniazid (INH), Pyrazinamide (PZA), and Ethambutol (EMB) also known as RIPE therapy. The patient may take the medicine on their own or they can take it under a healthcare worker's supervision which is also known as Directly Observed Therapy (DOT). Few tips for taking the TB medications without DOT include the following: medicine should be taken at the same time every day, a family member or a friend should be asked to remind the patient to take the medications, mark off on the calendar for each day that the medicine has been taken, purchase a weekly pill dispenser or ask a healthcare provider what should be done if a dose is forgotten.

Without appropriate treatment, TB can be fatal. The TB bacteria can spread to other parts of the body through the blood system and may cause complications that include spinal pain, joint damage, swelling of the membranes that cover the brain (meningitis), liver issues, kidney issues, or heart disease.

Diagnosed with TB? Don't spread TB! Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze or laugh; do not go to work or school until your healthcare provider says it's OK to do so. Avoid close contact with anyone and sleep alone in a bedroom; make sure to air out your room often to prevent the TB bacteria from lingering around in your room and infect someone who breathes the air.

Reference:

Satake H, Hanaka N, Honma R, et al. Complications of Distal Radius Fractures Treated by Volar Locking Plate Fixation. Orthopedics. 2016;:1-4.

Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/>

Available at: <http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/tuberculosis/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

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**The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at [www.louisianapharmacists.com](http://www.louisianapharmacists.com).**

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