

Video Transcript: Tuberculosis Disease with Dr. Calderon

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Hello, I am Dr. Edardo Calderon, Physician Director with the Tuberculosis Division at the Alabama

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Department of Public Health. And today I would like to give you important information about

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the disease called tuberculosis or TB. To start treatment for tuberculosis is free of charge in

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the state of Alabama. Yes, that is right. All TB care including provider examination, blood work,

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chest radiographies and medications are free at Jefferson County Department of Health,

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Mobile County Health Department, and in all other counties through the Alabama Department

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of Public Health. We healthcare providers know that people usually have concerns about

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tuberculosis. So I want to give information about the following questions. How does a

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person get TB disease? How will I know if I have TB disease? Fear may prevent

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a person from seeking care for TB disease. So I need to see a doctor. What's the treatment?

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What else can I expect while on treatment for TB? And I want to assure you that TB can be cured.

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The first question is how does a person get TB disease? Well, anyone who breathes in TB germs

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can get TB disease. But some people are at higher

risk. For instance, people who have reactivation

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of a previous untreated TB infection. Also, individuals spending time in settings where

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people are close together. Recent contact with a person with TB disease. People who came from or

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travel to areas where TB is common. And finally, people with weakened immune system by diabetes,

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malnutrition, medications, infections, cancers or renal failure with hemodialysis.

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The next question is how will I know if I have TB disease? Typically, you may have these symptoms.

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cough, night sweats, fever, losing weight, poor appetite. Or less frequent, you can

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present with these complaints, weakness, recurrent pneumonia, back pain, enlarged lym-

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enlarged lymph nodes or no symptoms at all. Yes, TB disease may be affecting a

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person and that individual does not have any symptoms. It's very important to know that

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TB disease is a very serious illness. TB can destroy your lungs and other organs in your

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body and it can be fatal. At this point, you can spread TB germs to people close to you.

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We know that fear may prevent a person from seeking help for TB disease.

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We medical providers understand that people who may have TB fear losing their jobs,

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life partners or friends,
opportunities for education,

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etc. And that fear may result in delays in
seeking care and the disease worsens.

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A person may wonder, do I need to see a doctor?
The answer is yes. It is your best option.

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The doctor will check you by medical interview and
examination and by ordering experiment studies,

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blood work, chest radiography, maybe skin
test and if TB in other organ is suspected,

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you may have additional studies. Experiment studies
are an important part of this evaluation.

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It will require very necessary information
to direct your treatment and diagnosis.

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So if a person has TB or the treatment, first
any medication, your doctor will recommend you

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to wear a face mask to prevent TB transmission
to others. And the good news is that antibiotics

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kill the bacteria. so you can get better. Usually,
you will need to take four antibiotics together

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by direct observe therapy do which means that
the nurse will bring the medication to your

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house as frequent as is indicated. The
length of treatment is usually 6 months,

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but it can change from four to 9 or 12
months depending on the severity disease and

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the affected organ. And the treatment is highly

effective and well tolerated. Treatment prevents

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disease worsening, death, and transmission.
Some people may experience adverse effects.

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We have ways to manage them and we will support
you no matter what. And the final question,

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what else can I expect while on treatment for
TB? Well, besides giving you the medication,

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your nurse and doctor will work in coordination
with your primary care provider to control any

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chronic disease that help the bacteria make you
sick for instance diabetes, uncontrolled HIV or

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cancer. Our nutritional service will provide
a nutritional evaluation and supplements

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when indicated. Our TB team will provide
support to quit smoking or stop using drugs.

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We will periodically check for resolution of TB
symptoms, weight change, check your experiment and

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chest radiographies and after completing your TB
therapy, you should continue seeing your regular

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health provider. The best news of all is that
TB can be cured. Yes, you can be cured of TB

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and live a normal life. Remember that cure starts
with TB diagnosis. If this TB diagnosis is early

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is much better to get cure, follow instructions
from your doctors, nurses, and from the health

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department. And during the treatment, keep up
with all your medical visits. Most important,

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carefully follow instructions about how to take your medications. And remember, if you have been

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close to a person with TB disease, you have to be checked to find out if the TB germ got into

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you. Contact your health care provider or local health department to be checked. Be sure to tell

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your health care provider when you spend time with the person who has TB disease. And my final