



### Who

Approximately 95% of tuberculosis cases occur in developing countries, mainly in Africa. Risk factors may be divided as either impaired immunity (host factors), or increased exposure to infectious persons (environmental factors). Poverty, HIV-infection, and drug resistance are major contributors to the resurging global epidemic.

### What

Tuberculosis is a bacterial disease caused by members of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex. The lungs are the major site for primary infection and disease, but manifestations in other organs are well-known. Inhalation of aerosol droplets containing bacteria leads to either immediate clearance of the organism, or primary disease, or latent infection, or disease reactivation.

### Where and when

The highest rates (100 per 100,000 inhabitants or higher) are observed in sub-Saharan Africa, India, and the islands of Southeast Asia and Micronesia. Intermediate rates (26 to 100 cases per 100,000) occur in China, Central and South America, Eastern Europe, and Northern Africa. Low rates (< 25 cases per 100,000) occur in the United States, Western Europe, Canada, Japan, and Australia.

### Prevention

BCG is an attenuated live strain of *Mycobacterium bovis* used as a vaccine, mainly to prevent tuberculous meningitis and disseminated disease in children, and also pulmonary disease in adults. Contraindications for vaccination may exist. In high-risk settings, personal protective measures to prevent the inhalation of aerosols is important. For a tailored advice, please consult your travel doctor.



### Symptoms

Symptoms of primary disease include mainly fever and chest pain. Latent infection does not cause any clinical symptoms. Onset of active disease many years following a period of latent infection may happen and present with symptoms including cough, weight loss, fatigue, fever, night sweats, chest pain, dyspnea, and/or hemoptysis (sputum mingled with blood).



### Treatment

Detailed information on the treatment of tuberculosis is complex and beyond the scope of this factsheet. The treatment needs to be tailored and personalized, taking into account relevant topics like individual patient characteristics and medical history, drug susceptibility and toxicity, disease localization, and public health aspects.

### In case of infection

Patients with infectious pulmonary tuberculosis should be isolated or take precautions to prevent airborne transmission. Globally, the World Health Organization estimates a treatment success rate of 85% and a mortality rate of 15%. The prognosis will be worse in case of limited or delayed access to health care facilities.