



*Takapuna Grammar School*  
International Department  
**TUBERCULOSIS (TB)**

**What is TB?**

TB is a disease caused by a 'germ' called *myobacterium tuberculosis*. It usually attacks the lungs but it can affect almost any part of the body including bones, the kidneys, glands and the brain lining.

**Why is TB important?**

It is important because 1/3 of the world's population is infected with TB and millions of people die of TB each year.

TB can kill if left untreated, with medication it can be cured.

**Who can get TB?**

Anybody can get TB, old or young, rich or poor, men, women or children.

**How is TB spread?**

When a person with TB disease of the lungs coughs or sneezes the germs go into the air and can be breathed in by people close by, especially people who have close contact over a prolonged period of time.

Most people who breathe in these TB germs do not get sick with TB, their body defences fight the bacteria to stop it growing. The body builds a capsule around the germ. It cannot be passed on to others while in this state. Usually the capsule remains dormant or

sleeping. If the person, in the future, is in very poor health the germ can 'wake up' and the person will develop TB. The chance of this happening is 1 in 10.

**What are the main signs and symptoms of TB?**

Weight loss, increased tiredness, night sweats and a cough of more than 3 weeks duration.

**What do I do if I have some of the symptoms of TB?**

Go to a doctor or student health clinic. Seek medical attention early.

**I know someone with TB, should I avoid them?**

No, once they have been taking their TB medication for a few weeks and are back to work or study they are no longer infectious.

**What if I have been vaccinated with BCG?**

This does not always protect people from TB. The benefit of the BCG may lessen over time.

**How can I ensure good health?**

- Get plenty of sleep
- Eat healthy regular meals ( with plenty of fruit and vegetables)
- Go to the doctor if you feel unwell

