

# What You Should Know About Taking Tuberculosis Medications



## Taking medicines to kill TB germs can cure TB disease.

TB germs are strong. You need to take medicine for many months (up to 9 months) to be sure all of the TB germs are dead. Follow your health care provider's directions for taking your pills.. Your health care worker will talk to you about **Directly Observed Therapy (DOT)**. DOT is when a health care worker is with you when you take your TB pills.

## Do not stop taking your pills too soon.

Even though you might start to feel better in few weeks, TB can come back. You can again spread TB to others.

## Remember the following when taking your TB pills:

Tell your health care worker if you are taking **any** other medicines. This includes medicine, vitamins and herbs that you buy without a prescription. Avoid drinking beer, wine or liquor while taking TB medicines. Tell your health care provider if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or taking birth control pills. Tell your health care worker if you have any health problems other than TB.

Common TB medicines include:

- Isoniazid (INH)
- Rifampin (RMP)
- Pyrazinamide (PZA)
- Ethambutol (EMB)

## TB medicines are usually safe.

Very few people have side effects. If you have any of the problems listed below, you must call or see your health care worker right away.

- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Yellowing of your eyes or skin
- Tingling numbness around your mouth
- Fever for more than 3 days
- Aching joints
- Loss of appetite
- Stomach pain
- Nausea
- Bleeding easily- Bruising easily
- Tingling in your fingers or toes
- Blurred or change in your vision
- Skin rash

## If you are taking Rifampin, you should know that:

- Your urine, saliva, or tears can become orange in color.
- Your soft contact lenses may get stained this can happen **very quickly!** Do not wear soft contact lenses when taking Rifampin.
- Your skin may become more sensitive to the sun. Use sunscreen and cover skin that might be exposed to the sun.
- Some birth control methods **do not work as well** when you are taking Rifampin. Women should use a back-up form of birth control, such as condoms, while taking Rifampin.

If you have questions about medication, contact your Health Care Provider.

Adapted from:  
Virginia Department of  
Health Division of TB

**Protect yourself, your family and friends from TB.**  
**Finish your TB treatment!**