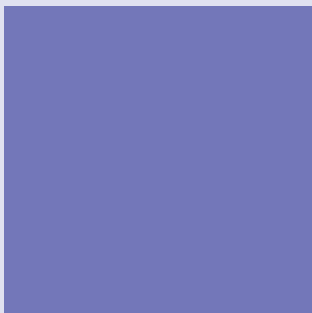
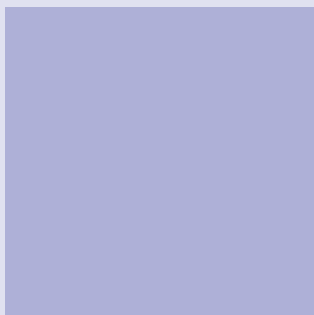


You can obtain further information from:



Children have a far greater risk of contracting tuberculosis than adults: the younger the child, the greater the probability of contracting the disease.

- your District Public Health Office
- Fachbereich Gesundheit der Region Hannover Tuberkulose-Beratungsstelle
www.hannover.de (> Leben in der Region Hannover > Gesundheit > Gesundheitsschutz > Tuberkulose)
Telephone consultation: 0511-616-22888
- Medizinische Hochschule Hannover Klinik für Pädiatrische Pneumologie, Allergologie und Neonatologie
www.mhh.de (> Kliniken > Zentrum Kinderheilkunde und Jugendmedizin > Klinik für Pädiatrische Pneumologie, Allergologie und Neonatologie)
Telephone consultation: 0511-532-3251 or -3220
- Deutsches Zentralkomitee zur Bekämpfung der Tuberkulose (DZK)
www.dzk-tuberkulose.de

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Tuberculosis in children

Information for parents and guardians



Niedersachsen

What is tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis is a contagious disease caused by bacteria (mycobacteria).

It is a very serious disease, which can result in death if it is not treated.

Tuberculosis is mostly a disease of the lungs, although other organs can also be afflicted. Moreover, with small children there is also a risk of contracting tuberculous meningitis (inflammation of the cerebral membrane).

Typical symptoms of the disease may be absent in the beginning phase of the disease. The following complaints are indications:

- Coughing
- Fever
- Drowsiness and exhaustion
- Loss of weight
- Perspiration during the night

When a person is diagnosed with tuberculosis, the Infectious Diseases Protection Act requires the notification of the Public Health Office. The Public Health Office then investigates all persons in close contact with the infected person according to defined criteria. This is intended to prevent the further spread of the disease.

As a rule small children with the disease do not infect other persons, as their coughing is not as vigorous as for adults.

How does one contract the disease and how does one recognise the infection ?

Coughing, sneezing or even merely speaking by a person infected with tuberculosis distributes the bacteria throughout the ambient air, where they can be inhaled by other persons in the immediate surroundings (so-called aerosol infection).

An infection with tuberculosis bacteria can be detected only six to eight weeks after contact with a diseased person. It is then determined by means of a skin test or a blood test.

As the growth of tuberculosis bacteria is very slow, symptoms of the disease only appear after months or even years. It is also possible that the disease does not break out in spite of having been infected.

The diagnosis of tuberculosis is confirmed by an x-ray image of the lungs and the detection of tuberculosis bacteria in the bronchial secretions. With small children the gastric juice is also frequently examined.



My child was in contact with a person suffering from tuberculosis. What must I do?

Consultation with your Public Health Office

All cases of persons afflicted with tuberculosis are notified to the Public Health Office. The Public Health Office will contact you within a short time. For further questions you can also consult your paediatrician.

Prevention of an infection

Children under five years of age should be immediately examined after contact with a person suffering from tuberculosis and given protection in the form of suitable medicines. These children must be examined again after eight to twelve weeks.

For older children, whether immediate treatment is required must be carefully considered. In such cases, whether or not an infection developed should be controlled around six to eight weeks after the last contact with the diseased person.

Treatment by a medical specialist

Following consultation with the Public Health Office, as a rule your child will be treated by a paediatrician or in a paediatric clinic.

The most effective measure for the prevention of tuberculosis is a preventive medicinal treatment.