

# Treatment for Latent Tuberculosis (TB) Infection: Rifampin

Your tests show that you have latent TB infection or LTBI. This means TB germs are in your body and could make you sick.

The TB germs are not hurting you and cannot spread to other people. It is like the germs are asleep. If the TB germs wake up, they can make you sick. This is called active TB disease. You can spread TB to other people if you have active TB disease.

## How do I prevent active TB disease?

You can take medicine to prevent getting active TB disease. Rifampin is a common medicine used to treat LTBI. It kills the sleeping TB germs before they make you sick. It can take many months for the medicine to kill the TB germs because they are strong.

Take your Rifampin as often and as long as your doctor or nurse tells you. Taking your Rifampin without food is best. If your stomach is upset, it is okay to take your Rifampin with a small amount of food or try taking it at bedtime.

## Why should I take medicine if I do not feel sick?

Sleeping TB germs are much easier to kill before they wake up and make you sick.

## What if I do not take the medicine?

If you don't take Rifampin, miss too many days, or stop taking the medicine before your doctor or nurse tells you to, you may become sick with active TB disease. It is important to kill TB germs so you and your family stay healthy.

## What if I have had a BCG vaccine?

BCG protects children from severe forms of TB but only for a few years. It cannot protect against getting LTBI or active TB disease. If you have had BCG, you should still take medicine for LTBI to protect yourself and others.

## What if I cannot pay for Rifampin?

Ask your doctor or nurse about getting free TB medicine from the Washtenaw County Health Department Tuberculosis Program.



## What if I move away?

Tell your doctor or nurse before you move to another state or city. They can help you continue to get TB medicine after you move.

## What should I know about LTBI medication?

- Do not drink beer, wine, or liquor until you finish your LTBI treatment. Drinking alcohol while taking Rifampin can hurt your liver.
- Tell your doctor about other medicines you are taking.
- Use barrier methods, like condoms, to prevent pregnancy. Rifampin can make hormonal birth control not work well. Call your doctor or nurse right away if you become pregnant.

### Most people take Rifampin without problems. Some people do have problems, such as:

- Fever for more than three days
- Poor appetite or feeling tired
- Upset stomach or vomiting
- Pain in your abdomen
- Dark urine (tea or coffee color)
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Skin rash or itching
- Numb or tingling hands or feet

### If you have any of these problems:

1. Stop taking your medication.
2. Call your doctor or nurse right away. Do not wait for your next appointment.



## Remember to take your TB medicine.

If you miss too many days, the medicine might not work. Here are some ways to help remember:

- Keep your Rifampin where you will see it.
- Take your Rifampin at the same time of day. For example, after you brush your teeth or just before you go to sleep.
- Ask someone to remind you.
- Mark your calendar after you take your Rifampin.
- Post a reminder or alarm on your cell phone.
- Use a pill reminder box.
- If you miss any days, write them down so you can tell your doctor or nurse at your next appointment.

Medicine	Schedule	# of Pills/Day	Length of Time
Rifampin	Daily		4 months

Name of my doctor:

Name of my clinic:

Telephone number:

*Information adapted from the Minnesota Department of Health Tuberculosis (TB) Prevention and Control Program. This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider.*