

Message from JITCO

— Tuberculosis Prevention —

In Japan, more than 20,000 people nationwide develop tuberculosis every year. The percentage elderly people in particular is increasing yearly, but the numbers of people in their 20s and 30s are also on the rise. Even young people need to be careful, because unhealthy lifestyles could weaken the immune system and make them more susceptible to infection. There is also an increasing number of cases of group infection in schools, workplaces, medical institutions, and welfare facilities.

If left untreated, tuberculosis can be life-threatening, but in most cases, the disease can be cured by proper medication. Early detection and treatment are important not only to prevent the disease from becoming more severe, but also to prevent it from spreading to family members and work colleagues.

JITCO からのお知らせ

— 結核予防について —

日本では、毎年全国で2万人を超える人が新たに結核を発病しています。特に高齢者の割合が年々高まっていますが、20歳代及び30歳代も増えています。若い人でも不健康な生活を繰り返していると免疫力が低下して感染しやすくなるので注意が必要です。また、学校・事業所・医療機関・福祉施設での集団感染も増えています。

結核は放っておくと命にかかわる病気ですが、殆どの場合薬で治すことができます。早期発見・早期治療は本人の重症化を防ぐためだけでなく、大切な家族や職場等への感染の拡大を防ぐためにも重要です。

○Beware of prolonged coughing

Early symptoms of tuberculosis include coughing, sputum, and fever. If your coughing continues for more than two weeks, you should go to a hospital, clinic, or other medical institution. The onset of tuberculosis may also produce symptoms such as blood-tinged sputum, poor appetite, weight loss, night sweats, and low-grade fever.

○Tuberculosis is caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*

When a tuberculosis patient coughs or sneezes, tuberculosis bacteria are expelled into the air, which could infect someone who deeply inhales the bacteria. However, not everyone who is infected with the bacteria will develop the disease. The rate of infection of the disease is said to be around one or two in every ten people.

○Do not assume that tuberculosis will always be transmitted

Tuberculosis will not always be transmitted. Simply developing the disease does not have any effect on others. Infection occurs only when coughing and sputum symptoms appear and tuberculosis bacteria are expelled from the body. In most cases, proper treatment will prevent the bacteria from becoming active (prevent the risk of infecting others) in about two weeks.

○Long-term medication is the basic treatment for tuberculosis

If you are diagnosed with tuberculosis, you will need to receive treatment using medication. Depending on your symptoms, your treatment may last from six months to more than a year.

○Persons close to someone with tuberculosis should also receive a medical examination

The health department will sometimes recommend a medical examination for those who are close to someone diagnosed with tuberculosis, since they may be infected with tuberculosis bacteria or may have already developed the disease. Anyone who is found to be infected as a result of the medical examination will need to take medication to prevent development of the disease. In most cases, development of the disease can be controlled by taking a six-month course of medication.

(Reference: Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Social Welfare and Public Health, "Prolonged coughing is a warning," "To those who will receive a tuberculosis checkup," "Tuberculosis 2011")

○長引く咳は要注意

結核は咳、痰、発熱等の症状が始まります。2週間以上咳が続いていたら、病院や診療所等の医療機関を受診しましょう。結核の症状には、このほかにも、痰に血が混じる、食欲が落ちる、体重が減る、寝て起きると汗をかいている、微熱が続く等があります。

○結核は結核菌によって起こる病気です

結核は患者が咳やくしゃみをした時に結核菌が空気中に飛び散り、それを肺の奥まで吸い込むことで感染します。結核に感染しても必ず発病するわけではなく、発病するのは10人に1人か2人といわれています。

○結核だからうつる、は間違いです

結核は必ずうつるのでしょうか。いいえ。結核が「発病」しただけでは、ほかの人にうつすことはありません。咳や痰などの症状があり、結核菌が身体の外に出るようになって、初めて感染がおこります。ただし、ほとんどの場合、適切な治療をすれば、2週間程度で感染性（ほかの人に感染させるおそれ）はほぼなくなります。

○結核の治療～長期服薬が基本です

もし結核と診断されたら、服薬による治療が必要となります。必要な服薬期間は症状等により6ヶ月から1年以上となることもあります。

○周りの人も健康診断を受けましょう

結核と診断された人の身近にいる人に対して、保健所から必要に応じて、健康診断のお知らせをすることがあります。結核に感染している人や、既に発病している人がいるかもしれないからです。健康診断の結果、結核に感染していると分かった人は、発病予防の薬を飲むこととなります。発病予防の薬を6ヶ月間確実に飲めば、ほとんどの発病は抑えられます。（参考資料：東京都福祉保健局作成『長引くせきは赤信号』、『結核の健診を受ける方へ』、『結核2011』）