

"I had MDR-TB and I am CURED now"
Lucky Tshabalala, Mpumalanga



**Me and my
MDR-TB**

Everything you need to know

What are the symptoms of MDR-TB?

The symptoms of MDR-TB and ordinary TB are the same. If you have been coughing for more than 2 weeks and are losing weight, are tired and sweating in the night you should go to the nearest clinic and ask to be tested for TB.

What is MDR-TB and how is it spread?

MDR-TB is a special form of TB that does not respond to ordinary TB treatment. MDR-TB is difficult to treat. It needs special treatment for many months and part of this should be in hospital. When ordinary TB treatment is not finished, TB germs develop resistance towards those pills, and a person then has MDR-TB. Treatment for ordinary TB will not kill MDR-TB germs. You can also get MDR-TB from someone who already has it, if this person is in close contact with you. You can also pass MDR-TB on to your own close contacts, as MDR-TB is just as infectious as ordinary TB. You must always cover your mouth when coughing to prevent spreading the disease.



What is the treatment for MDR-TB?

Treatment takes up to 2 years. For the first 4 months you will get an injection everyday. The injection is the strongest treatment against MDR-TB, and even if it hurts, you must have it to help you get better. You will also get 4 different types of pills to take everyday for the first 4 months. For the rest of treatment, there are 3 different types of pills that you have to take daily. All the pills and the injections have to be taken, because the treatment works together to kill the MDR-TB germs. The pills can make you feel sick, and if that happens, you should immediately tell the nurse.



Why do I have to take treatment for many months?

The treatment available for MDR-TB is not as strong as the treatment for ordinary TB. More pills and a longer time are necessary to kill all the MDR-TB germs. You must not miss any treatment, otherwise all the MDR-TB germs will not be killed and the MDR-TB can return and make you even sicker. Even if you are feeling well you must not stop taking pills until the nurse says you are well and can stop with the treatment.



"When I was first told that I had MDR-TB I was scared. I heard it was a bad TB and I thought I was going to die. I thought it was AIDS in disguise. I was very thin and ill. I went to hospital and took the pills and the injections, every day, as the nurses told me. Then I started feeling better and now I know that MDR-TB is a curable disease. I enjoy my youth again and I am back at school. I encourage everyone who has MDR-TB to take the treatment and to have hope in your heart. With the help of God MDR-TB can be cured"

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MDR-TB and HIV/AIDS

There is no link between MDR-TB and HIV/AIDS. If you have MDR-TB it does not mean that you also have AIDS. If you are HIV-positive, and have MDR-TB, you can still get treatment for MDR-TB. If you take the treatment as you are told, your MDR-TB can be cured. If you receive treatment for HIV/AIDS, you can still get MDR-TB treatment.

Why do I have to get treatment in hospital?

The first few months of treatment are crucial to your cure. You are hospitalised to get the injections, to make sure that you take the treatment as necessary, that you do not miss any treatment, and to take care of any problems you may get as a result of treatment. MDR-TB treatment is only available at the MDR-TB hospital in your province. It cannot be treated at other hospitals.

TREATMENT FOR MDR-TB IS FREE OF CHARGE



How long do I have to stay in hospital?

You will have to stay in hospital until there are no more MDR-TB germs in your sputum. This can take many months, but most patients have to stay in hospital for 4 to 6 months. Then you can go home and go back to work. As long as you take the pills until the end of treatment, you will not give the disease to your family or to other people.

What will happen when I am discharged from hospital?

You will still have to take the pills for a couple of months, and the hospital will organize for you to continue treatment at your nearest clinic. You must go there every day to get your pills, and if you do not feel well, you must tell the nurses and they will contact the hospital. For you to be cured of MDR-TB, you must take the pills every day until the end of treatment even if you feel healthy and think the disease is gone. You will also have to go back regularly to the hospital for check-up visits until you have finished treatment.



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