What are some of the possible side effects of medicine for TB infection?

Side effects of the pills are rare, but may include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dark urine
- Skin rash
- Yellow skin and/or eyes
- Loss of appetite
- Numb hands and/or feet

If you have any of these side effects, immediately tell your doctor, nurse, or trained health worker from the Department of Public Health.

What role will the Department of Public Health play?

The Department is concerned about you and your family and gives treatment for TB infection. If you are treated by Public Health, you may be seen by a physician or Nurse Practitioner who has had special training in managing patients with TB infection or active TB disease.

For more information on TB, visit
www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/tb

TB Infection
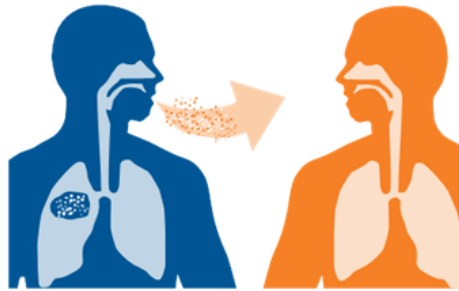
What you need to know to stay healthy

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

What's TB Infection?

If you have TB infection, TB germs are present but "asleep" in your body. If you have TB infection, you will not have symptoms, may not feel sick, and cannot spread TB germs to other people. However, if your immune system weakens, these TB germs may "wake up" and multiply. You may then get sick with active TB. If you have active TB disease, you have symptoms like a bad cough, night sweats, fatigue, and weight loss. Also, you can spread TB germs to other people. TB mainly affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body. If left untreated, TB can lead to death.

How does someone get infected?

TB germs are spread in the air when someone who is sick with active TB disease coughs, sneezes, laughs, speaks, or sings. If you breathe in air that has TB germs, you may get infected. However, you cannot catch TB from clothes, dishes, food, bedding, or physical contact with someone who has active TB disease.

What's the treatment for TB Infection?

If you have been infected with TB germs, you may become sick with TB. This can happen right away or several years later. TB infection can be treated with anti-TB medicine. There are now shorter, regimens that can be finished in 3-4 months.

Why should I take medicine if I don't feel sick?

You may develop active TB disease if you don't take medicine for your TB infection. Many TB germs are killed after you start taking your medicine, but some stay alive in your body for a long time. As long as you still have TB germs in your body, they can "wake up," multiply, and make you sick. If you are taking TB medicine, it's important that you finish your medicine, as your doctor or health care provider prescribes.

How can I tell if I have TB Infection?

Get a TB skin or a blood test. If you get a skin test, make sure you go back to your doctor after two to three days for your test results. If you take the blood test, you don't need to return to the clinic for your results.

What is the difference between TB infection and active TB Disease	
TB infection	**Active TB Disease**
No symptoms	Bad cough for 3 weeks or longer
Don't feel sick	Coughing up blood
Positive skin or blood test (usually)	Positive skin or blood test (usually)
Chest x-ray normal (usually)	Chest x-ray abnormal (usually)
Cannot spread TB	Lack of appetite
Can develop active TB if treatment not completed	Weakness, fatigue
	Chills, fever, sweating at night
	Weight loss

What if the skin test or blood test result is positive?

A positive skin or blood test result usually means that you have been infected with TB germs, but it doesn't necessarily mean that you have active TB disease. Other tests, such as a chest x-ray or sputum (phlegm) sample, are needed to find out if you have active TB disease.

When should I get the skin or blood test?

You should get tested for TB if you:
- Have symptoms of active TB
- Have spent a long time with someone who has active TB
- Have a weakened immune system, like HIV or diabetes
- Have injected illegal drugs
- Have come to the U.S. recently from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, or Eastern Europe
- Have worked or stayed in a nursing home, homeless shelter, prison, or other group setting.