



AWARENESS

## TB AWARENESS MONTH

**Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that claims many lives every year and is particularly prevalent in South Africa. March is TB Awareness Month.**

Despite being treatable, TB is still a major cause of death around the world.

Here's what you should know about it:

### 1. What is TB?

TB is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium.

Most of us are aware that the disease attacks the lungs, but it can attack almost every part of the body.

TB is transmitted from person to person in the air, often via coughing and sneezing.

It is often spread in poorly ventilated areas between family members, living partners, colleagues and close friends because of the proximity and amount of time these people spend together.

Knowing someone close to you who has TB doesn't necessarily mean that you will also get it.

### 2. Who is most at risk of TB?

Anyone can get TB, irrespective of their income or demographics. However, some people are more vulnerable to TB than others.

The elderly or very young, people with compromised or weak immune systems (like people who are HIV-positive) and those who spend long periods of time near others with TB are more at risk.

### 3. What are the symptoms of TB?

TB often presents as a combination of symptoms.

These symptoms can be mild for months and then worsen, they include a persistent cough, phlegm and other mucous, chest pains, fatigue, weight loss, fever, night sweats and coughing blood.

### 4. Treatment

TB is treatable, and many have been cured of the disease by taking the right medication in the correct way.

If you begin to show any of the symptoms and are concerned that you may have been exposed to TB, seek medical advice.