Overview

For most Canadians, the risk of getting tuberculosis (TB) is very low but some groups of people still have a higher risk of developing the disease. People who smoke and those who are exposed to tobacco smoke are more likely to become infected with tuberculosis and develop the disease. 1, 2 There are two types of TB—latent infection and active disease. With latent infection, people can become infected with tuberculosis but the germs do not harm them or other people. TB infection can develop into tuberculosis disease, which can damage the lungs and may be contagious. People who are at greater risk of getting TB disease include:

- People who have been exposed to active TB.
- People who visited or have come from areas in the world where TB is common.
- Aboriginal people.
- People who live in shelters.
- Staff and residents of long-term care facilities, hospitals and correctional centres. 3

The Link between Smoking and Tuberculosis

- People who smoke have a greater chance of being infected with tuberculosis and of developing the disease. 2,4,5
- People who have TB and continue to smoke, are more likely to get TB again and are more likely to die from TB than someone who does not smoke. 4 Up to one in every five deaths from tuberculosis could be avoided if patients with TB did not smoke. 5
- Treatment for TB is less effective if patients being treated for this disease continue to smoke. 4
- Children who were infected with tuberculosis are more likely to develop active tuberculosis when they are exposed to passive or second-hand smoke. 6

Helpful Resources

- The CAMH (Center for Addiction and Mental Health) Nicotine Dependence Service www.camh.net
- Smokers’ Helpline. Free telephone, web-based or text service offering tips, tools and support to help with quitting smoking. http://www.smokershelpline.ca/ (1 877 513-5333)
References


For additional clinical topics as they relate to tobacco use, please see the CAN-ADAPTT website at: www.can-adapt.net