

24TH MARCH 2026

# WORLD TUBERCULOSIS TB DAY

Stop the spread. Cover your cough.



*Celebrating*  
**YEARS**

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## **WORLD TB DAY, 24TH MARCH 2026 "YES WE CAN END TB"**

At the Sir Brian Bell Foundation, we believe supporting internationally recognised health awareness days and sharing accurate health information plays a vital role in saving lives across our communities. Today we mark World Tuberculosis (TB) Day – a reminder that TB remains the world's leading cause of death from a single infectious disease and one of the top 10 causes of death globally. While TB affects people of all ages in every country, it is both preventable and curable.

In 2024, an estimated 10.7 million people fell ill with TB worldwide, including 5.8 million men, 3.7 million women and 1.2 million children. A total of 1.23 million people died from tuberculosis (TB) in 2024 (including 150 000 among people with HIV).

In Papua New Guinea, we face one of the highest TB rates in the world. TB impacts our friends, families, colleagues and neighbours every year – yet it does not have to.

"TB is preventable and curable, but early testing and treatment are critical. All it takes is a simple test to protect yourself and those around you. Through awareness, regular testing and proper treatment, we can stop the spread of TB in PNG," said Bronwyn Wright, CEO of the Sir Brian Bell Foundation.

We are proud to partner with Businesses for Health Papua New Guinea (B4H) to train several of our Brian Bell Group team members to act as TB wardens to identify TB symptoms and risk factors and provide support through testing, treatment and returning to work. Currently there are 46 specially trained TB Health Wardens across the business who are able to provide support and guidance until professional medical care is accessed. Additionally, we provide regular awareness sessions to promote early detection and medical referrals within the workplace. Make your health your responsibility. Get tested, get treated. Together we can TB in our communities. Talk to your doctor about a TB test today.

## **BUSINESSES 4 HEALTH:**

Your workplace can play a huge part in ending PNG's deadliest infectious disease. Invest in TB, save lives. B4H trains non-health-staff in simple and effective TB and HIV workplace health promotion programming. We help you to find people with TB, access free services and minimise the impact of PNG's TB crisis on your business.

If you want to learn more about TB in Papua New Guinea visit or receive TB training in your workplace visit: [businesses4health.com](https://businesses4health.com) or call 7676 2482.

## **WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION:**

Each year we commemorate World TB Day to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The theme of World TB Day 2026 - 'Yes! We can end TB!' - is a bold call to action and a message of hope, affirming that it is possible to get back on track and turn the tide on the TB epidemic, even in a challenging global environment. With decisive country leadership, increased domestic and international investment, rapid uptake of new WHO recommendations and innovations, accelerated action, and strong multisectoral collaboration, ending TB is not just aspirational - it is achievable.

**Learn more:** [www.who.int/campaigns/world-tb-day/2026](https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-tb-day/2026)

## **WHAT IS TB**

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by bacteria that most often affects the lungs and is spread through the air when people with TB, cough, sneeze or spit. These germs can stay in the air for several hours, depending on the environment, and only a few germs need to be inhaled to become infected. Tuberculosis is preventable and curable with treatment. In 2024, an estimated 10.7 million people fell ill with TB worldwide, including 5.8 million men, 3.7 million women and 1.2 million children according to World Health Organization. About a quarter of the global population is estimated to have been infected with TB bacteria at some time with about 5–10% of people infected with TB eventually getting symptoms and developing TB disease. TB symptoms may be

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mild for many months it can lead to delays in seeking medical help causing further transmissions to others. If you are experiencing a persistent cough or any signs of TB, it is important to be evaluated by a doctor immediately and take a TB test.

### **SYMPTOMS OF TB**

People who have latent TB infection do not have any symptoms and cannot spread TB to others. Those who have active TB may experience:

- A cough, sometimes with blood or sputum
- Chest pains
- Weakness
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fever
- Night sweats

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms, it is important to see your doctor immediately for a health evaluation and TB test.

### **MULTIDRUG-RESISTANT TB**

Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is a form of TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to the two most powerful first-line anti-TB drugs isoniazid and rifampicin. Drug resistance can emerge when anti-TB medicines are used incorrectly, the incorrect prescription was provided, drug quality is poor, or patients stopped the treatment early. Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) remains a public health crisis and a health security threat according to World Health Organisation with only about 2 in 5 people with drug-resistant TB accessing treatment in 2024. In some cases, more severe drug resistance can develop; extensively drug-resistant TB, XDR-TB with even fewer treatment options available.

### **TB AND HIV**

According to World Health Organization HIV and TB form a lethal combination, each speeding the other's progress along. People living with HIV are 12 times more likely to fall ill with TB disease than those without TB. In 2024, about 150 000 people died of HIV-associated TB. If you have TB or HIV talk to your doctor about the combined risks.

### **TB AND PREGNANCY**

Pregnant women diagnosed with TB should start treatment as soon as TB is detected as advised by their doctor. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) refusing treatment can cause significant risks to the pregnant woman and her baby. Babies born to women with untreated TB disease may have lower birth weight, only rarely, a baby may be born with TB. If you are pregnant and concerned about your TB risk, talk to your doctor.

### **TREATMENT OF TB**

The majority of TB cases can be cured when medicines are provided and taken exactly as prescribed. Active, drug-susceptible TB disease is treated with a standard 4 or 6-month course of 4 antimicrobial drugs, which must be taken exactly as advised by a medical health professional. It is important not to skip doses of your medications, share your medications with anyone else, or stop taking your medication even if you start to feel better. If you are having any issues remembering to take your medication, it is important to notify your doctor immediately and make sure you are on the right track with your treatment.

### **PREVENTING TB TRANSMISSION**

To reduce exposure in households where someone has infectious TB, the following precautions should be considered when possible:

- Houses should be adequately ventilated.
- Follow cough and sneeze etiquette; always cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing. Use a tissue, upper sleeve or elbow and never cough or sneeze into your hands. If you use a tissue, throw it in the bin immediately.
- Spend as much time as possible outdoors.
- If possible, sleep alone in a separate, adequately ventilated room
- Spend as little time as possible on public transport or where large numbers of people gather.

Cover your cough.  
Stop the spread.

