

Sample Script to Explain LTBI Treatment

Source: San Francisco Tuberculosis Control Unit

- Tuberculosis is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs. The germs are put in the air when a person with TB of the lung coughs, sneezes, laughs, or sings.
- If your skin test is positive, you have a bump on your arm after the tuberculin skin test. You may also have a blood test that is positive for TB. This means that you have been exposed and infected with the germ and have it in your body.
 - If you are young, healthy, and your immune system is working well, your body makes a capsule around the germ. If you are healthy with strong defenses, then the germ will stay alive inside the capsule and not do any harm. It can stay inside the capsule for a long time, even many years. When it is inside the capsule you are not contagious and can't spread the TB germ to anyone else.
 - If for any reason your defenses are not working correctly; because you develop a chronic disease like diabetes, or HIV, or you are taking medications that cause your immune system to not be as strong, such as chemotherapy for cancer or steroids, or if you are drinking a lot of alcohol or not eating well and taking care of yourself, then the capsule breaks open and the bacteria can get out.
 - The bacteria are still alive and can damage your lungs. If this happens, you can spread TB to other people.
 - You may have received a TB vaccine when you were an infant or child. The TB vaccine, called BCG, protects babies and young children from developing severe deadly types of TB, but it doesn't protect you from getting TB in the form where the bacteria in in the capsule.
- Your chest x ray is normal and showed that the germ is still inside the capsule and hasn't started to damage your lungs or become contagious.
- There is a medicine you can take to kill the germ inside the capsule so that if the capsule breaks open the germ will be dead and won't cause any damage to your lungs and you won't spread it to other people.
 - The medicine is taken every day for xx months. It is an antibiotic that you take every day. It is important for you to take the medication for all xx months.
 - It is worse to start the treatment and then after a month or two say, "I'm tired of this and want to quit."
 - If you are interested in taking the medicine, we can give you the medication here at the clinic. We can start treatment today and you can pick up the medication once a month here with me or from your pharmacy.
 - We can test your liver with a blood test today and if everything is normal, we can start the treatment tomorrow or the next day.