



## Tuberculosis FACT SHEET

### Tuberculosis Prevention and Control

## Taking TB drugs

### **Why do I have to take antibiotics for so long?**

TB bacteria grow very slowly. Antibiotics kill bacteria when they grow, so *treatment of TB infection* and *treatment of TB disease* takes at least 6 months.

### **What if I don't take all my medication?**

You will probably start to feel better after only a few weeks of *treatment of TB disease*. However, it is important to keep taking the drugs because the TB bacteria are still alive in your body. If you stop taking your medicine, or don't take your medicine regularly, *drug-resistant TB* may develop. You will get sick all over again, but this time you will need to take drugs longer to be cured and there will be more side effects. You may also get *infectious TB disease* again and spread the disease to your family, friends and coworkers.

### **Can DOT help me?**

The only way to be cured of TB is to take ALL of your antibiotics. This will not be easy! Try taking your drugs at the same time every day – for example, before eating breakfast. Your doctor or nurse may suggest a directly observed therapy (DOT) program to help you take your drugs regularly. If you are on a DOT program, you will meet with a health care worker every day or several times a week. DOT helps in several ways. The health care worker will remind you to take your medicine and complete your treatment. If you complete your treatment, you will be cured of *TB disease*. The health care worker can also make sure the antibiotics are working as they should, watch for side effects, and answer questions you may have about TB.

It is always best not to drink alcohol while taking TB drugs.