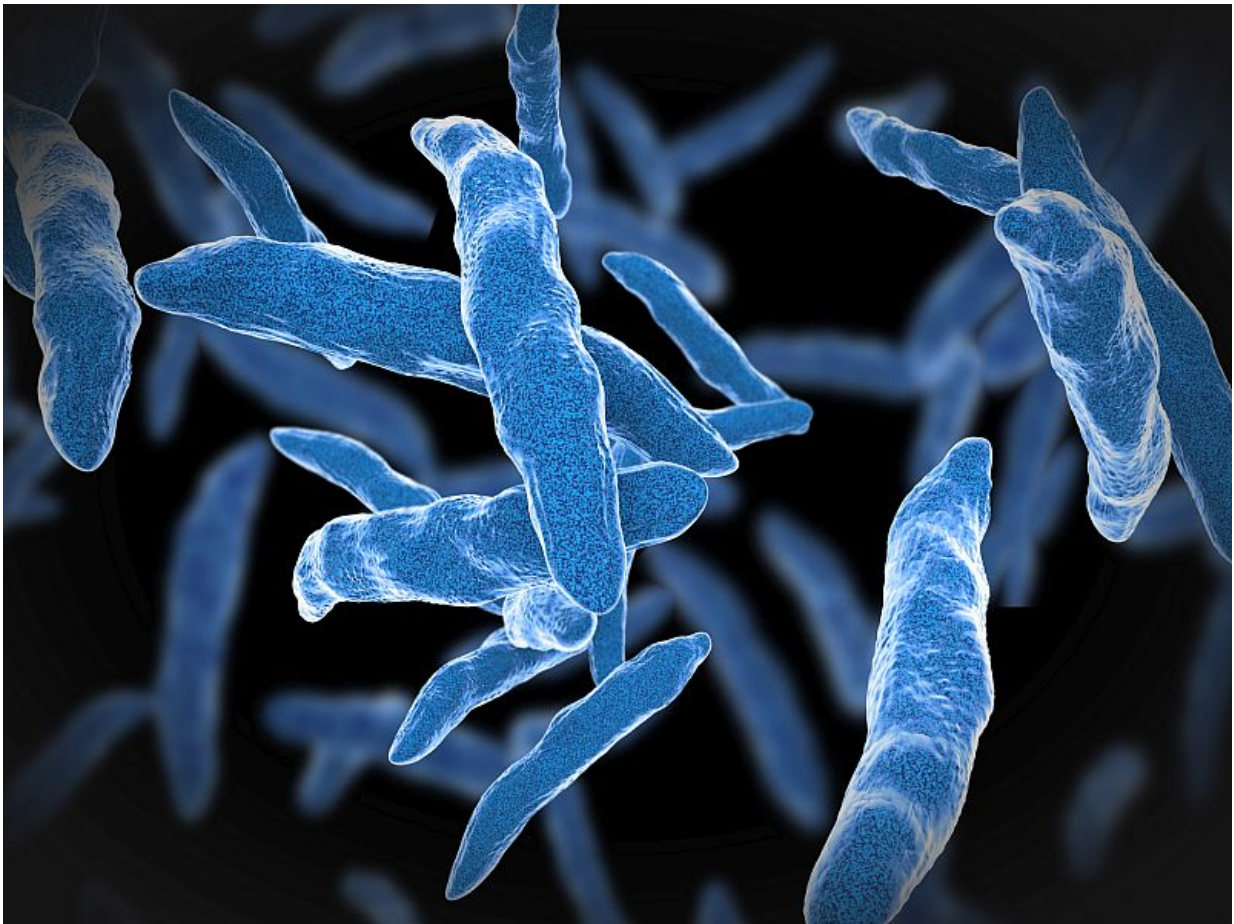


Screen high-risk adults for tuberculosis, experts say

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(HealthDay)—Adults at greater risk for latent tuberculosis infection

should be screened for the condition, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends.

"The task force recommends that primary care clinicians screen adults at [increased risk](#) for [latent TB] to help prevent the progression to active TB," panel member Dr. Francisco Garcia said in a task force news release. Garcia is director and chief medical officer of the Pima County Health Department in Tucson, Ariz.

Tuberculosis, commonly known as TB, is an infection caused by bacteria. Anyone in close contact with someone with tuberculosis may be exposed to the bacteria. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, according to the health panel.

TB usually attack the lungs, but the bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine and brain. If it isn't treated properly, the disease can be fatal, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

About 30 percent of people exposed to the bacteria will develop latent tuberculosis. These people are infected but don't have any symptoms, the task force panel explained.

People with latent TB can't spread the infection to others, but up to 10 percent of them eventually develop active TB if the condition is left untreated, according to the task force.

TB isn't as common in the United States as it is in other parts of the world. China, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Mexico, the Philippines and Vietnam are all countries with a high prevalence of tuberculosis. Anyone born or living in these countries has a greater risk for latent TB. Residents of group settings—such as homeless shelters and correctional facilities—are also at increased risk for exposure to TB, the panel

explained in the news release.

The task force's independent panel of national experts noted their recommendation is "grade B," meaning they are highly certain it will have significant benefits. Screening tests that can detect latent TB are available. There are also effective treatments that can prevent these infections from getting worse.

The draft recommendation statement was posted for public comment on the [task force](#)'s website. Comments can be submitted from March 8 until April 4.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [tuberculosis](#).

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