

In Finland, we want to take care of immigrants' health.

Tuberculosis, or TB, is a disease caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB usually affects the lungs, but can also manifest in other parts of the body. The TB bacterium is airborne, meaning it is transmitted through the air we breathe.

A student can be a TB carrier if they have spent time in a region where the disease is prevalent or otherwise been exposed to people infected with it. The Finnish Student Health Service provides tuberculosis screenings to higher education students based on self-reporting.

Once TB has been contracted, it can become active. These people can have a latent TB infection, which means that the bacteria are present but inactive ("asleep") in their body. People with latent TB don't have symptoms and can't transmit the disease to others. However, the bacteria may later become active, resulting in active TB. A student with the active disease can then unknowingly expose others to an infection for example during their free time, in practical training or at work. If the disease spreads, the consequences can be serious for those catching it. The purpose of the screening is to identify students with TB and, as soon as possible, start them on medication to cure the disease. This is done to protect the health of both the students themselves and other people. The treatment of tuberculosis is good and free of charge in Finland.

### **Am I in a tuberculosis risk group?**

You're in a risk group if

- you were born or have lived in a region where TB is common. These include Africa, Asia, and Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia in Eastern Europe.
- you've been in close contact with a person with pulmonary tuberculosis (TB of the lungs).
- you've been involved in the care of patients with TB.
- you've had TB yourself.

To also prevent other infectious diseases, we will provide you with the vaccinations included in the national vaccination program.

To discuss more about tuberculosis screening and vaccinations, please call our nationwide service number: +358 46 710 1073 (open Mon–Thu 8 am–3 pm and Fri 8 am–2 pm).