

**New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health Services  
Tuberculosis Program**

**Treatment of Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI)**

**1. What is the medication for LTBI treatment?**

*Isoniazid (INH)* is the drug of choice. Isoniazid is a special antibiotic medication to treat tuberculosis infection and disease. It is important for people who are infected with the TB germ to take this medication to prevent them from developing active disease.

**2. How should the medication be taken?**

INH is taken one tablet a day, preferably on an empty stomach, according to your doctor's prescription, usually for 9 months. The TB germs are slow growing and they are also slow to kill. To clear up the infection, it is very important that you take this medication every day for the full length of treatment. Do not miss a dose. It will be helpful for you to take it at the same time each day and mark it on the calendar when you take your medication.

**3. What are the side effects of INH and what can I do to minimize them?**

All drugs may have some side effects. It is important that you be aware of the possible side effects of INH and report them to your health-care provider and public health nurse.

- *Fatigue* (being more tired than usual) -- If this occurs, try taking the medication at bedtime.
- *Slight nausea or upset stomach* -- If this occurs, take INH with a little food, such as a cracker, or with a meal. Antacids may also help, but do not take aluminum-containing antacids within one hour of the time you take INH.
- *Numbness or tingling of fingers or toes* -- If this occurs, contact your doctor. Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) is frequently ordered to lessen this side effect.

**4. Are there any serious adverse reactions to INH?**

INH is broken down through the liver. Blood tests to check your liver functions may be drawn periodically to make sure you are tolerating the medication. Indications of problems are:

- severe loss of appetite
- persistent nausea and/or vomiting
- dark urine (tea-colored)
- yellow color of the skin or eyes
- fever (more than 3 days)
- extreme fatigue/weakness (for more than 3 days)
- unexplained skin rash
- clay-colored stools (whitish)

**STOP YOUR MEDICINE AND CALL YOUR HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER IF THESE SYMPTOMS OCCUR**

**5. What other important information do I need to know about INH?**

- Do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking INH. This puts an extra strain on your liver.
- If you are pregnant, or become pregnant, inform your doctor right away. In most circumstances, INH is not taken during pregnancy.
- Occasionally, certain foods may cause altered blood pressures, palpitations, flushing, headache, sweating and itching. Examples of such foods are: tuna, aged cheese, smoked fish and some red wines. Avoid these foods if this occurs.
- *Remember to take your medication every day for the entire time prescribed. Taking the medication haphazardly, or for a shortened duration of time, will make your medicines less effective or ineffective. Treatment with INH can prevent you from getting sick with TB disease.*