¡Vivir A Todo Pulmón!

A story about TB
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For more information contact:
Teresa’s worry
In the middle of the night, Teresa knocks on her neighbor Mari’s door.

Mari, forgive me. I know it’s late.

What’s going on Teresa?

My husband is still sick! He has a fever, is sweating and has a terrible cough! Can I borrow some honey?

Let me see, my friend...

Take him the honey, but he needs medical attention, not just tea.

Maybe he’ll get better!
The next day Mari visits Teresa.

Teresa, Mari told me that your husband has been sick for a while.

Mari?

Teresa, how is Juan? I brought my friend Veronica. She works at the health clinic.

It's true, he's lost a lot of weight. He's very sick!

Teresa invites them into the living room.

Look, I'm not a doctor, but he could have an infection or maybe tuberculosis.

Mari, how is Juan? I brought my friend Veronica. She works at the health clinic.

No Teresa, tuberculosis exists here in our community and you don't get it from smoking.

Tuberculosis? Isn't that something from our country? Besides, Juan doesn't smoke.

Tuberculosis is caused by germs that are spread through the air.

Look, tuberculosis is curable, but it is necessary to take a test in order to be sure it is tuberculosis. If he wants, I can make an appointment.

At the clinic? But, we can't...you know...we don't have papers.

That doesn't matter Teresa. At the Department of Health they are not interested in that, only in the health of the people.
Even though Teresa is very worried about Juan, she can’t stop thinking about the problems with immigration.

What happens if... later at those places, they ask a lot of questions?

Really Teresa, they aren’t going to ask if you are here legally or not, or any of that.

Juan has to go. His health is too important.

Well yes, but...

They are only concerned with Juan’s health and of those around him, to make sure that they are well.

There are no ‘buts’! Juan’s health is the most important thing. Everything else doesn’t matter.

They are going to ask Juan a lot of things and some might be uncomfortable, but they will do it because it is necessary in order to be sure that he and others are free of tuberculosis.

Come on Teresa! Veronica is right. What are you waiting for? That he gets worse? If I were you, I’d make the appointment. There is nothing to worry about.

Well, there is something to worry about... Juan’s health.
Juan visits the clinic
Teresa and Juan arrive at the health clinic. While they register, Teresa insists that Juan gets the tuberculosis test.

But, I can’t have tuberculosis. I had the vaccine.

Seriously Juan, you need to get a tuberculosis test.

Remember what happened to Roberto, Raquel’s cousin, our neighbor?

I’m telling you that the healthcare worker told me that even with the vaccine you can get infected with tuberculosis.

Well, I don’t know about Roberto, but I have the vaccine and I can’t get TB!

You can get sick!

Mr. Juan? Go ahead, after you.

While they chat, Juan is called back to the consultation room. On the walk back, the nurse explains that it is necessary to use masks.
Different from other vaccines, BCG doesn’t prevent you from getting infected with TB.

What it does is prevent you from getting sick with severe forms of tuberculosis after you get infected, especially like meningitis in kids.

BCG prevents severe and fatal forms of TB. That’s why it is used in other countries where tuberculosis is more common.

Although it is also true that this protection only lasts a few years.

But I’ll repeat it again, BCG doesn’t prevent infection.

The nurse shows Juan information about BCG.

OK. Juan, the vaccine for TB, also called BCG is different than other vaccines.

Your wife is right, sir.

Call me Juan.

The nurse starts the physical exam although Juan has a lot of questions for her.

But if I had the BCG vaccine, then either way the tuberculosis test will come out positive.

I know that this is something a majority of people think.

That’s why it is important for parents to see that vaccinating children with BCG is a way of protecting them.
Look Juan, if it has been recommended that you take the tuberculosis test, do it!

It is the best way to know if you have TB, and once you know you’ll be able to get the medical attention you need.

Really? I didn’t know that.

There is no way to know exactly, but the chances are higher that it is due to an infection and not BCG.

Now that I know that the vaccine BCG won’t protect me from tuberculosis.

I think the best thing is to be tested.

Thank God, finally he will do it!

However, if the tuberculosis test comes out positive, even with BCG, it is probable that you are positive due to an infection, not the BCG.
My family, my community
After being diagnosed and starting treatment, Juan returns to the clinic for follow-up.

Juan, now that you have been diagnosed with TB and you are receiving medical attention, we need to talk about other things that are important as well.

As you already know, TB is transmissible.

Your family, as well as others around you, are at risk of being infected.

You are right! I hadn’t thought about that.

But don’t worry. Together we can identify all those that might be infected.

And that way, they can take the TB test, and if they need it, they can take the treatment which will prevent them from developing the disease in the future.

The first thing you’re going to do is tell me more about yourself.

Tell me, where do you work and what places do you frequently visit? Such as a church or the places you go to have fun?

And how will we know who could be infected?
¡VIVIR A TODO PULMÓN!

That’s always a possibility.

Stop, wait a second! Are you telling me that you are going to go around telling everyone that I gave them TB? Don’t even think about it!

Also, I will need to know the names of the people close to you and how I can contact them.

The next step would be contacting them and letting them know that they have been in contact with someone who has TB and that they are at risk. But in no way will I mention you.

No, Juan. I am not going to tell them that you have TB, only that they have been exposed to TB and that they are at risk. But in no way will I mention you.

As if they aren’t going to guess it!
If you prefer, I’ll give you some time so that you can tell them before I contact them.

Look Juan, think about it. You can help others just by sharing this information.

In any case Juan, you didn’t do anything you should be ashamed of.

The only thing you are really doing by sharing the information is protecting them from getting sick.

You get TB simply because you can breathe, and you had a little bad luck of breathing where there were TB germs in the air.

For everyone, the family, your friends, the ‘comadre,’ our godson, even the neighbor I suppose.

Looking at it like that, I guess...when can we start?
Protecting ourselves from tuberculosis is in our hands…
The healthcare worker, Lorena, arrives at the restaurant where Juan works. Lorena wants to speak with those that might have been exposed to TB.

Good morning, Don Roberto. My name is Lorena and I’m from the health department. Remember, we spoke earlier on the phone?

Of course, I’ve been waiting for you.

Don Roberto takes Lorena to the kitchen to explain to Juan’s co-workers the reason for Lorena’s visit. Don Roberto introduces Lorena to Karla.

Like I was telling you, what we are looking for is to determine if there is anyone here who might be infected with TB.

This will be quick. I won’t take up much of your time.

But I would like to talk to each of you in private to explain more of the details.

Why don’t you start with my co-worker Rosario? Right now I’m behind on this.
Alone with Rosario, one of the cooks, Lorena explains in detail the risks of TB and the need to be tested.

We know that you have been in contact with someone who has TB.

No!!!

Unfortunately it’s true, but don’t worry. That’s why we’re here.

TB is a disease transmitted through the air, and a person that has been in the same place as someone who is sick can get sick.

The only way to know if you’re infected is to get the TB test.

That’s why we want you to take the test.

No, I’m fine right now. I don’t feel sick.
But it’s better to do it to be sure. The test is very simple and can prevent you from getting seriously ill.

Well, nowadays there are two types of tests. One is a skin test, called TST.

The other is a blood test called an IGRA.

And what is the test like?

With the TST, we inject a substance called PPD into the skin of the arm, and measure if there is a reaction or not.

In the IGRA, we take some blood, and measure if there is a reaction with the TB.

And I have to do both tests?

With the TST, you have to return to the health center within 2 to 3 days after the test is done. There they measure the reaction on the skin and tell you if the result is negative or positive.

IGRAs will measure the reaction of your blood with TB and you don’t have to return to the clinic to measure the reaction. But this test is not always available.

No, let me explain your options.
Ah, OK. Now I understand the difference.

I’d like to make an appointment for you at the Health Center to take the test.

How is tomorrow?

In the morning. And don’t worry. The test is quick and we will know your results soon.

Fine. At what time?

I do have one worry. Will my personal information be released? Will it become public?

Not at all. All the tests are secure and confidential.

Great! That’s a relief! In that case I’ll see you tomorrow in the morning.

OK, very good. I’ll see you then. Can you tell Karla I’d like to talk to her now?

Yes, of course.

Rosario finds Karla after saying goodbye to Lorena.
VIVIR A TODO PULMÓN!
Pedrito has the infection!
Juan and Teresa’s ‘compadres’, Guadalupe and Jesus, talk while they wait for Teresa to arrive. They plan on spending the afternoon together.

Pedrito’s test for tuberculosis came out positive. Juan was right, Pedrito is infected.

I know, I also thought the same thing. If Pedrito is positive, he should be sick.

Wait! But he isn’t sick!

But fortunately the nurse explained that a positive test doesn’t mean you are sick.

What Pedrito has is LTBI.

What? LTBI?

What is that?
LTBI means *Latent Tuberculosis Infection*. That means that Pedrito has the germs, but they are inactive and they are not causing him to be sick. He also can’t give the infection to others. But, the germs could become active at any moment and then make him sick.

That’s why the nurse recommended the treatment for LTBI, to avoid Pedrito getting sick in the future.

While they talk about Pedrito, Teresa arrives at their house.

Guadalupe was telling me that Pedrito has LTBI.

Good afternoon, I’m here. How are you guys?

How is my godson?

No! I am so sorry! What are you guys going to do?
We decided it is best to give him the treatment for LTBI. We didn’t want to take the risk. The nurse explained to me that the treatment will prevent Pedrito from getting sick from active TB.

¡VIVIR A TODO PULMÓN!

Yes, I am also taking the treatment for LTBI.

It is long, but it is worth it.

That’s wonderful that they discovered the LTBI right now and not later when he is sick.

Sick and on ‘lock down’ in order to not give TB to others, like ‘el compadre’ is right now.

It is better than getting others sick.

Juan looked terrible when he was sick. Pedrito shouldn’t have to suffer through that.

Right, Pedrito? We’re here. We are your protectors!

After all, you are my superhero!
I want to keep up with the treatment but…
Juan has returned to work after being isolated. Even though he has to continue his treatment, he is no longer contagious. Meanwhile while working, Juan coughs a little and Karla starts to kid around with him.

Juan, watch where you’re coughing. I don’t want you to give me your tuberculosis.

Oh, come on Karla! The doctor said I’ve taken medicine long enough now so I’m not contagious anymore.

Thats great Juan! And other than that, how have you been?

I could be better. The medicines are a nuisance, and make me feel bad.

That’s too bad. How much time do you have left?

Six long months. I don’t know if I can take it. This is a pain.

Well, my tuberculosis is better, but the medicines are strong and there are a lot of them.

What are you saying Juan? How can you be getting better and still feel bad?

Have you talked to your doctors? I’m sure they can help you.
Juan is once again at his daily visit with his nurse to take his medicines, but this time he plans to ask her about all the side effects he’s having.

Let’s see Juan, what is the problem with the medications?

Well, I’m doing everything you said, and it has helped.

But I still do not have an appetite.

Let’s see Juan, what is the problem with the medications?

Well, I’m doing everything you said, and it has helped.

But I still do not have an appetite.

What else have you noticed?

After taking my medicine, my mouth tastes like metal. This also contributes to me not being hungry.

What you are telling me is common, but we can try something to change that.

Perfect!

Yes, I did. The nurse recommended some breathing exercises and foods to take with the medicines. And yes, it helped with the nausea that I had at the beginning.

But now it’s other things.

And have you told her?

No. I should, shouldn’t I? That’s a good idea, Karla. I’ll tell her when I see her.

That’s common for some of our patients during treatment. But I’m glad to hear you are no longer nauseous. Remember to keep eating. Nutrition is very important for fighting TB.

It still surprises me that my urine and sweat are an orange/yellowish color. But now I know that’s normal. It’s a side effect of the medication.

But now it’s other things.

We can start meeting later so you take your medicine closer to bedtime. That way you will have the metallic taste while you sleep.

Perfect!

OK, if you don’t mind coming later.
Of course not, let’s plan on it. Anything else?

I also have some skin irritation. Is that normal?

Well, I also have pain in my joints, but that may just be old age.

Both could be because of the medicine. I will give you some medicine for the pain if you need it.

But they could also be signs of something more serious. We should check it out more thoroughly. I will do what’s necessary to make sure everything is OK.

There’s no need to thank me. I really want you to feel better so you finish your treatment.

Don’t worry, I don’t want to get sick again, nor do I want stronger germs resistant to medicine.

Thank you very much for everything.

Remember, if you don’t follow these instructions precisely, if you don’t avoid alcohol, you can get sick again. And this time it will be worse, and the treatment will take longer.

Know this for sure. I will finish my treatment! Thanks for reminding me.

Juan is playing foosball with his ‘compadre’.

GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

¡VIVIR A TODO PULMÓN!
Not always. I have my good days too.

Well, besides this, how are you feeling? How are you doing with the medicine?

Everything is under control. I did what the nurse told me and look at me now!

I am winning the match against TB. It wasn’t easy, but working with a team is better. It feels great!

Not fair! You distracted me!

GOOOOOOOOOAAAAAALLL! And how did that feel?

That’s great Juan!

I am the best and you know it!
¡VIVIR A TODO PULMÓN!
It will always feel good to do good.
Since Juan recovered, he hasn’t missed church service on Sundays. After service he and Teresa greet the priest.

Juan, Teresa, good to see you here! How are you feeling?

Perfect! I just finished the treatment.

Good, Juan! I’m really glad you followed and completed the treatment.

You outdid yourself managing the situation, taking care of not only yourself, but others too.

I don’t understand how I could think that visiting the doctor was worse than the sickness!

You see now how it wasn’t necessary to worry about the things that you were afraid of with the clinic.

Teresa, you must be very proud of him.

They really were very nice to me.

It was hard. Especially at the beginning.

But never harder than being sick.

You outdid yourself managing the situation, taking care of not only yourself, but others too.
I think that the worst part was when some people didn’t treat us very well. But things got better with time.

Not everyone! You see Raúl?

What? I thought that Raúl’s issue was in the past.

He did change. He understood that tuberculosis was like any other illness. But then he returned to his old ways.

To tell you the truth, we don’t understand what happened.

Juan, let’s wait for everyone to leave and we’ll talk in my office. What do you think?

I feel much better now because the Father is going to help us.

In the end, if you explain the situation, people understand and change their attitudes.
In the Priest’s office, Juan and the priest talked about what happened with Raúl.

Tell me Juan, what happened now?

What is he talking about?

His issues with immigration. He’s saying that we’re going to get him in trouble by giving information about him to the government and other nonsense like that.

It’s Raúl and his problems, Father.

Now he is saying that we’re meddling where we shouldn’t.

He says that we’re going to ruin him and everybody else here.

At first, it was because TB is for “dirty” people, and now this. I think he’s looking for an excuse.
Calm down, Juan. Raúl is only showing his fear. I will talk with him.

Don’t worry. Everything will be fine.

Thanks, Father.

At another occasion, the priest meets with Raúl to talk about his problem with Juan.

Raúl, Raúl. What’s going on with you now?

About what, Father?

With Teresa and Juan. Is there any trouble again?
Yes, Father.

No,
Father.

It seems that you are just looking for excuses to treat them bad. As far as I know, they are your friends.

Yes, Raúl.

Yes, they are. But Father, you know what people say about people with tuberculosis.

Well, the only thing that I know about TB is that it is an infectious illness. I don’t know what you mean with “you know what people say about people with TB.”

Well, that they are dirty, that they are into bad things, that the devil is inside them, all those things.
I thought that we were clear about this. TB is an infectious illness, like any other. And no one is guilty or to blame, it’s just germs in your body.

What’s this about dirty people, devils and all this nonsense?

He is giving my information to everybody. That can’t be good.

What can’t be good? To worry about your health?

Yes, I know but now I’m worried.

Father, Juan is going to get us in trouble.

Look, Raúl. Number one, Juan is just giving your information to the clinic.

Number two, the clinic’s business is just health-related things, nothing to do with immigration.

No, Father it’s not that. But you know how things are. Immigration just needs a little thing to give you problems.

And number three, you should be thankful that your friend is taking care of your health, in spite of your attitude.
That same evening, Juan and Raúl become good friends again. The priest is happy and proud to see that things are working fine between everybody.

There is no doubt; you will always feel good doing good.
Share Information, not TB!

http://tinyurl.com/tbfotonovela

For more information contact:
Quick Facts...

- Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by germs.
- It is spread from person to person through the air. TB is transmitted when a person with active TB of the throat or lungs coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings.
- TB usually affects the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body.
- A person with TB can die if they do not get treatment.
- The most common symptoms are:
  - Feelings of sickness
  - Weakness
  - Weight loss
  - Fever
  - Night sweats
  - Cough with or without blood
- Tuberculosis infection can be latent or active. Latent is when a person is not sick because the germs are not active. When they are active, the person has symptoms and can spread the germs to others.
- Treatment for TB is usually with several medicines administered for several months (6 to 12 months).
- It is very important to take the entire treatment as is directed by your healthcare provider.
- The vaccine for TB is BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin).
- The BCG vaccine does not prevent TB infection, however it helps protect against more severe forms of TB.
- Protect yourself, your family and your community. Learn to live life to the fullest!