

Mayo Clinic - Complications of Tuberculosis

Without treatment, tuberculosis can be fatal.

Untreated active disease typically affects your lungs, but it can spread to other parts of the body through your bloodstream. Examples include:

- **Bones.** Spinal pain and joint destruction may result from TB that infects your bones. In many cases, the ribs are affected.
- **Brain.** Tuberculosis in your brain can cause meningitis, a sometimes fatal swelling of the membranes that cover your brain and spinal cord.
- **Liver or kidneys.** Your liver and kidneys help filter waste and impurities from your bloodstream. These functions become impaired if the liver or kidneys are affected by tuberculosis.
- **Heart.** Tuberculosis can infect the tissues that surround your heart, causing inflammation and fluid collections that may interfere with your heart's ability to pump effectively. This condition, called cardiac tamponade, can be fatal.