

Tuberculin Skin Test

Version 2 – April 2013

What is TB?

Tuberculosis, or TB, is a bacterial infection that can affect almost any part of the body. TB is most common in the lungs, a form called pulmonary TB.

For more information, please see Fact Sheet 1

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How is TB discovered?

The tuberculin skin test (also known as the Mantoux test)

You should report to your doctor or the nurse who gave the injection any problems, including rash or shortness of breath, that you encounter after receiving the test.

If you answer 'yes' to any of the following questions, or if you are unsure, please discuss with the nurse before you give consent for your tuberculin test.

- Are you currently being treated for tuberculosis?
- Have you ever had tuberculosis?
- Have you had a previous tuberculin (Mantoux) test? Where? When? What was the result?
- Have you had a viral illness in the last week?
- Have you received any live viral vaccines within the last four weeks? These include measles, mumps and rubella (MMR); yellow fever; chickenpox; typhoid tablets; and Sabin.
- Are you currently taking antibiotics?
- Do you have any immune-suppressing illness, such as HIV, lymphoma, or Hodgkin disease?
- Are you taking any oral or injectable steroid medications, such as prednisone or cortisone?
- Are you receiving immune-suppressing treatment, such as radium or anti-cancer therapy?
- Do you have sarcoidosis?
- Do you have any allergies?

After the test has been given, what next?

After removing the cotton wool approximately 10 minutes after the injection has been given, there should not usually be any reason to cover the site. If for any reason a cover is deemed necessary, use light gauze; do not use band-aids or creams.

You may see a reddened area at the site of the injection. Sometimes it may be slightly blistered and you may experience some pain, or there may be no reaction at all.

You will need to return in two to three days (minimum of 48 hours) for the injection site to be examined.

Results and follow-up

The nurse will advise you of your result and give you documentation for your records.

Interpretation of the test result will depend on a number of factors, including whether you are known to have been in contact with somebody who has TB, whether you have previously had a BCG vaccine, your age and your medical history.

If your tuberculin test is negative, you may be advised to either:

- have a repeat test in 1–2 weeks
- have a BCG vaccination only if indicated
- have no further follow-up.

If your injection site shows a reaction, you may be advised either:

- that no further follow-up is needed
- to avoid further tuberculin tests
- to consult with a medical officer at a Tuberculosis Control Unit, or your local doctor if preferred.

If you have been in contact with someone with tuberculosis, you may be requested to have a further tuberculin test known as 'break of contact' at a later date. This test is done to check if there is any increase in the size of the test reaction from the first test.

Further information

Location	Telephone	Location	Telephone
Metro South Clinical TB Service Princess Alexandra Hospital (<i>Brisbane</i>)	3176 4141	<i>Cairns</i> TB Control Unit Cairns Base Hospital	4226 6240
<i>Rockhampton</i> TB Control Unit Rockhampton Base Hospital	4920 6211	<i>Townsville</i> TB Control Unit Townsville General Hospital	4433 2863
<i>Toowoomba</i> TB Control Unit Toowoomba Hospital	4616 6446	<i>Mackay</i> TB Control Unit Mackay Base Hospital	4885 5949
<i>Torres and Cape</i> TB Control Unit Thursday Island	4030 6046		