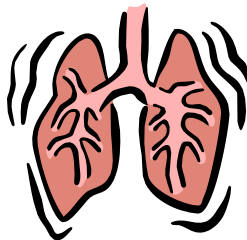


Your TB Skin Test

What does it mean?

What is TB?

"TB" is short for a disease called tuberculosis. The TB germs may spray into the air if a person with **TB disease** coughs, sneezes, or shouts. Anyone nearby can breathe TB germs into their lungs.



TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. This is called **TB infection**. Millions of people have TB infection, and don't feel sick. Your immune system traps TB germs.

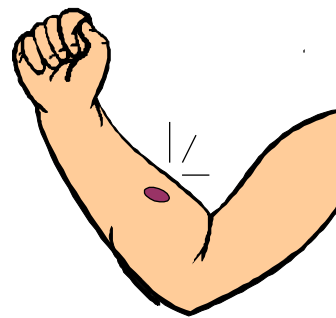
But sometimes in people with poor immune systems, the TB germs can break away. Then they cause **TB disease**. The germs can attack the lungs or other parts of the body. People with **TB disease** need medical help to prevent serious illness.

What will the test tell me?

A skin test is the only way to tell if you have **TB infection**. The test is "positive" if a bump about the size of a pencil eraser or bigger appears on your arm. This bump means at sometime you were close to someone who had TB and you caught the TB germs.

It is important that you return 2 to 3 days (48 - 72 hours) after your test is done to be checked for the result.

Do not itch the test area or cover test with a bandaid.



A person with TB disease:

Has TB germs in their body, and;

- Signs of illness which may include coughing, weight loss, fever, tiredness, weakness, and spitting up blood.
- Can pass germs to others (unless the person with TB disease is taking pills to fight TB).

The disease can cause serious illness and death, unless it is treated

A person with TB infection:

Has TB germs in their body, but:

- Has no signs of being sick.
- Appears healthy.
- Cannot spread TB germs to others.

Treatment at this point will stop the germs from ever causing disease.

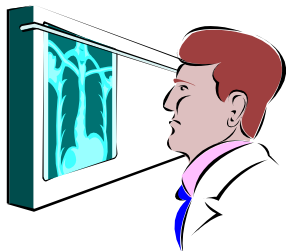
Who should have the test?

Certain people should have the test, including people who:

- Are infected with HIV
- Live or work in jails or prisons
- Are health care workers
- Live or work in nursing homes or mental institutions
- Live with, or are in close contact with, someone who has TB disease
- Have any signs of TB disease
- Come to the US from a country where a lot of people have TB
- Use needles to inject "shoot" drugs

What if I have a positive test?

Your doctor will have you get some further tests, such as an x-ray of the lungs.



If you have **TB infection**, you may need treatment so you will not get **TB**

disease later. This is called "preventative" treatment. Isoniazid (INH) is the anti-TB drug used most often. It takes six months to a year to kill all the TB germs.

If you have **TB disease** you will need to take several medicines, and get medical follow up.

People who are more likely to get very sick from **TB disease** include:

- Alcoholics or injection drug users
- People with diabetes, or certain cancers
- People with HIV infection

These things make your body weaker, so it can't fight the TB germs.

Can I give TB germs to others?

If you have a "positive" test, but have no signs of TB disease, it is likely you have **TB infection** and cannot pass germs to others.

Only a person with **TB disease** can give TB germs to others.

If you have ever had a "positive" test, it is important that you do not have any more skin tests for TB.

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