



The Tuberculin Skin Test

What You Need to Know

This simple skin test (the Mantoux Test) is used for children and adults. Test results show if you have tuberculosis (TB) germs in your body. A positive test cannot tell if the germs are active or inactive.

How it works

A small needle is used to put some testing material, called tuberculin, just under the skin. Usually this is done on the inside of the forearm. The person who is tested must return to the doctor or clinic in 2 to 3 days to have the results read.

What it shows

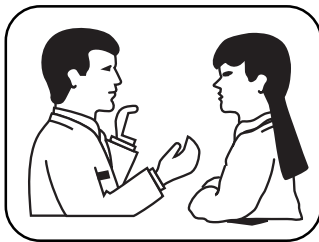
If your test is negative

This usually means that you are not infected (you do not have TB germs in your body).

Test results may not be accurate if you were infected recently. It usually takes 2 to 10 weeks after being infected for the skin test to show a positive result. Also, the test results may not be accurate if your immune system is weakened.

What to do

Ask your doctor (or the person who sent you for the skin test) if you should have the test repeated or need other testing.



If your test is positive

This usually means that you have been infected with the TB germ. You may have inactive TB infection or active TB disease. Other tests such as an x-ray are needed to determine which phase of TB has caused the positive skin test.

What to do

1. Have a chest x-ray NOW. This will show if TB germs have started growing in your lungs.
2. AFTER the chest x-ray
 - If the x-ray is abnormal, other tests may be ordered by your doctor.
 - If the x-ray is normal, it usually means that you are infected, but you are not sick with TB. TB infection is usually treated so that you will not get sick with TB disease in the future. Ask your doctor or clinic whether you should take the medicine to prevent active TB disease.



People with inactive TB infection cannot spread TB to others. However, if these people do not take medicine, they may become sick with active TB disease and spread TB germs to others.

For more information, call 692-8627.

