

How should I take care of my arm after the TB skin test?

There may be slight swelling, redness, bruising or itching at the site, this is normal.

Aftercare:

- Do not cover the test site with a bandage.
- Be careful not to rub or scratch the test site. If the area itches put a cold cloth on it.
- You can wash your arm and dry it gently.

TB skin test appointment reminders

I should have my TB skin test checked on:

Date and Time: _____

If a 2-step TB skin test is needed, I should return for the second test on:

Date: _____

Questions? Call and ask to speak to a TB nurse

Toll Free: 1-800-922-0096

St. Thomas Site: 519-631-9900

Woodstock Site: 519-421-9901



Tuberculosis and TB skin testing

What is tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by a germ called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It is spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine.

People with **latent TB infection** have TB germs in their body, but they are not sick because the germs are not active. These people do not have symptoms of TB disease, and they cannot spread the germs to others. They may develop TB disease in the future. They may be offered medicine that will help stop them from developing active TB in the future.

People with **active TB disease** are sick from TB germs that are multiplying (active) in the body. Symptoms of TB disease in the lungs may include coughing, chest pain, fever, weight loss and night sweats. People with TB disease of the lungs or throat are capable of spreading their germs to others through coughing, sneezing, singing etc. People with active TB are given medicine to treat the disease.

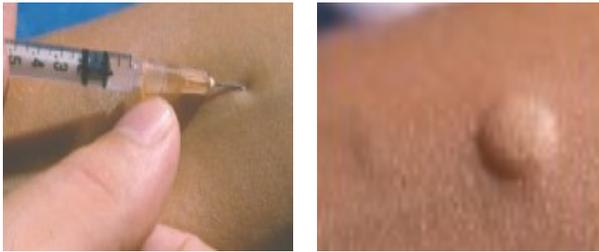


Tuberculosis and TB skin test

What is a TB skin test?

A TB skin test is a simple way to find out if you have latent TB. A small needle will be used to place a small amount of liquid, called tuberculin, just under the skin on your forearm.

You must return to the health unit 2 days after the test to have your arm checked, even if your arm looks okay to you. If you have a reaction to the test, it will look like a raised bump. The nurse will measure the size of the reaction. If there is a bump, it will go away in a few weeks.



What is a 2-step TB skin test?

A two-step skin test means that you need two TB skin tests. The second test should be done 1 - 4 weeks later and only if the first test is negative.

The 2-step skin test needs to be done **ONCE** only and never needs to be repeated. Any additional TB skin tests can be a one step, regardless of how long it has been since the last TB skin test.

A two-step test is recommended for people who will need repeat TB skin tests in the future (e.g. health care providers).

What is the cost of a TB skin test?

TB skin tests are \$40 per step (\$80 for a two-step).

TB skin tests are **free** for those who are:

- contacts of an active case of TB;
- undergoing treatment or have a medical condition that makes them more likely to develop active TB;
- new to Canada and need the test for immigration medical surveillance;
- required to have a TB skin test by an educational institution for admission or continuation in a program of study.

Tuberculosis and TB skin test

Who should have a TB skin test?

You may need a TB skin test if you:

- Work, volunteer or are a student in a health care setting, prison or shelter
- Have HIV or certain other health problems
- Have been in close contact with someone with active TB
- Have lived in a country where many people have TB

Who should not have a TB skin test?

- Those with a documented history of a positive TB skin test or history of treatment for active or latent TB
- Those with extensive burns or eczema at the TB skin testing site
- Those who have had a live vaccine (e.g. MMR, chickenpox, yellow fever) within the past 4 weeks
- Those with a current major viral illness

TB skin tests may be given to:

- Those who have had BCG vaccine
- Those who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Those taking low-dose corticosteroids
- Those who have had a non-live vaccine in the past 4 weeks.

What if my TB skin test is positive?

A TB skin test is “positive” if there is a bump of a certain size where the fluid was placed. This means you might have TB germs in your body. Most people with a positive TB skin test have latent TB infection. To be sure, your health care provider will examine you and send you for a chest x-ray. You may also need other tests to see if you have active TB disease.

