Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)

A Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) can show if you have ever been exposed to tuberculosis (TB).

**How is the test done?**

A small amount of tuberculin solution is injected under your skin on the lower part of your arm. For a short time afterward, the area around the injection site may look raised and red. A drop of blood may appear at the site – this is normal. Do not scratch the area or cover it with a bandage.

You can do all of your normal activities after the test, including bathing and showering.

**You will have to return in 48-72 hours (2-3 days) to have your test read (have the injection site checked). It is very important that you return for your scheduled appointment.**

**Who should not get a TST?**

In some cases, a TST should not be done. Before your test, please tell the nurse if you have ever had:

- A documented positive TST reaction.
- Active TB or a history of treatment for TB infection or disease.
- A severe blistering reaction to a previous TST.
- Serious burns or eczema on your arms.
- A viral infection, such as mumps, measles, or chicken pox.
- Immunization with a live vaccine in the last 4 weeks, such as MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), varicella (chicken pox), or yellow fever.

**You can still get a TST if you:**

- Are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Have a common cold.
- Have an undocumented previous positive TST reaction that did not blister.

**Two-step TST**

Your first TST may be negative, but it may stimulate your immune response and a positive reaction may happen when you’re retested anytime from 1 week to 1 year later. This delayed response is called the “booster” phenomenon.

The two-step TST provides an accurate “baseline” for people who may have future or repeated testing. The two-step TST only needs to be done once if it is done properly and documented. Any future TSTs only need to be one step, no matter how long it has been since your last TST.

For more information, please visit Canadian Tuberculosis Standards: