

THE TB SKIN TEST

The tuberculosis (TB) skin test, sometimes called a PPD or Mantoux, is a simple, harmless way to find out if you have latent TB infection (LTBI).

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS										
<p>❖ What is latent TB infection?</p>	<p>There are two phases of TB. Both phases can be treated with medicine. When TB germs first enter your body, they cause latent TB infection (LTBI). Without treatment, LTBI can become active TB disease. Anyone can get TB because it spreads from one person to another through the air.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="649 588 1404 1134"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="649 588 1015 640">Phase 1 - Latent TB Infection</th> <th data-bbox="1015 588 1404 640">Phase 2 - Active TB Disease</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="649 640 1015 787">TB germs are “asleep” in your body. This phase can last for a very long time – even many years.</td> <td data-bbox="1015 640 1404 787">TB germs are active and spreading. They are damaging tissue in your body.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="649 787 1015 892">You don’t look or feel sick. Your chest x-ray is usually normal.</td> <td data-bbox="1015 787 1404 892">You usually feel sick. Your doctor will do special tests to find where TB is harming your body.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="649 892 1015 1039">You can’t spread TB to other people.</td> <td data-bbox="1015 892 1404 1039">If the TB germs are in your lungs, you can spread TB to other people by coughing, sneezing, talking or singing.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="649 1039 1015 1134">Usually treated by taking one medicine for 9 months.</td> <td data-bbox="1015 1039 1404 1134">Treated by taking 3 or 4 medicines for at least 6 months.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Phase 1 - Latent TB Infection	Phase 2 - Active TB Disease	TB germs are “asleep” in your body. This phase can last for a very long time – even many years.	TB germs are active and spreading. They are damaging tissue in your body.	You don’t look or feel sick. Your chest x-ray is usually normal.	You usually feel sick. Your doctor will do special tests to find where TB is harming your body.	You can’t spread TB to other people.	If the TB germs are in your lungs, you can spread TB to other people by coughing, sneezing, talking or singing.	Usually treated by taking one medicine for 9 months.	Treated by taking 3 or 4 medicines for at least 6 months.
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<p>❖ How can I tell if I have latent TB infection?</p>	<p>A TB skin test (PPD or Mantoux) can show if you have latent TB infection (LTBI). You could have LTBI if you have ever spent time close to someone with active TB disease (even if you didn’t know they were sick).</p> <p>Your health care provider will use a small needle to inject some harmless testing fluid (called “tuberculin”) under the skin on your arm. Your health care provider MUST check your arm 2 or 3 days after the TB skin test, even if your arm looks OK to you.</p> <p>If you have a reaction to the test, it will look like a raised bump. Your health care provider will measure the size of the reaction. If there is a bump, it will go away in a few weeks.</p>										
<p>❖ How do I take care of my arm after the TB skin test?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t cover the spot with a bandage or tape • Be careful not to rub it or scratch it • If the spot itches, put a cold cloth on it • You can wash your arm and dry it gently 										

THE TB SKIN TEST, cont.

Don't be afraid to be tested! TB can be cured!

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❖ What if my TB skin test is negative?	<p>The test is “negative” if there is no bump (or only a very small bump) at the spot where the fluid was injected. A negative TB skin test usually means that you don't have TB.</p> <p>In some situations, especially if you have recently been exposed to someone with active TB disease, you may need to have another TB skin test later.</p>
❖ What if my TB skin test is positive?	<p>The test is “positive” if there is a bump of certain size where the fluid was injected. This means you probably have TB germs in your body. Most people with a positive TB skin test have LTBI. To be sure, your health care provider will examine you and order a chest x-ray. You may need other tests to see if you have active TB disease. You may be referred to the Chest/TB Clinic at Boston Medical Center where this can be done at no cost to you.</p>
❖ You should have a TB skin test if:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have had frequent close contact with someone who has active TB disease • You have lived in a country where many people have TB • You work or live in a nursing home, clinic, hospital, prison, or homeless shelter, or • You have HIV infection or certain other health problems.
❖ What if I've had BCG vaccine?	<p>Even if you have had BCG vaccine, you can have a TB skin test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have had BCG vaccine still can get latent TB infection and active TB disease. • BCG vaccine may help protect young children from getting very sick with TB. This protection goes away as people get older. • BCG vaccine sometimes causes a positive TB skin test reaction. But if you have a positive reaction to the TB skin test, it probably is from TB germs in your body – not from your BCG vaccine.