



HEALTH SCREENING

TB SKIN TEST

HOW IS THE MANTOUX PPD SKIN TEST GIVEN?

A small amount of harmless substance called PPD Tuberculin is placed just under the top layer of the skin on the forearm with a small needle and syringe.

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE SKIN TEST?

The test can show if a person has ever been "infected by" tuberculosis (TB) germs.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SKIN TEST IS GIVEN?

The test is read by a Registered Nurse 48-72 hours after it has been given. Bruising and redness is normal after the test and may last a few days. Generally, a swelling of 15 millimeters or more is considered positive.

- If the PPD is negative, no further action needs to be taken.
- If the PPD is positive, a chest X-ray will be needed to see if the germs are present in the lungs.

WHAT DOES A POSITIVE TEST MEAN?

It means that the TB germ is in the body or the person is "infected". It does not necessarily mean that he/she has active TB disease. If the chest X-ray is normal and there are no symptoms, the TB germs are probably inactive and TB disease is not present. There is, however, a 10% chance that in the future active TB disease may develop, particularly when the person's resistance becomes low. Medication may be prescribed to prevent this.

HOW CAN A PERSON BE INFECTED AND NOT HAVE TB DISEASE?

After TB germs enter the body, in most cases, body defenses control the germs by building a wall around them. TB can stay alive inside these walls for years in an "inactive" state. While inactive, TB cannot harm the person and cannot spread to other people. The person is "infected" but does not have TB disease. He/she is not sick and may not know that he/she is infected. However, the disease can cause infection, in later years, if not treated now.

WILL BCG VACCINATION CAUSE A POSITIVE PPD SKIN TEST?

BCG vaccination is given in many countries to protect against TB. After BCG vaccination, the PPD skin test may become positive. However, the likelihood of a positive reaction to the test wanes after 3-5 years.