

The T-SPOT[®].TB Test

TESTING FOR TUBERCULOSIS: Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

What is tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis, or TB, is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Tuberculosis was once the leading cause of death in the United States, but it can now be successfully treated if discovered in time.

Microscopic droplets suspended in the air pass the TB organism from person to person. Infection can occur when an uninfected person comes in contact with someone who has active tuberculosis.

People who are exposed to TB may never get sick. They develop what is called **latent TB infection**. A person with **latent TB** is not contagious and does not show any signs or symptoms of being sick. The immune system controls the infection. Latent TB may develop into active TB if the immune system becomes weakened.

A person with **active TB disease** is sick and shows signs and symptoms of the disease (e.g., persistent cough, weight loss). People with **active TB** are infectious and can spread the TB bacterium to others.

How can I be screened for TB?

There are two types of tests that screen for TB infection: the tuberculin skin test (**TST** or PPD) and blood tests such as the **T-SPOT.TB** test. The tuberculin skin test has been around for over 100 years. The T-SPOT.TB test is a new blood test that was approved by the FDA in 2008. This new test is particularly important for those who have had the TB vaccination, also known as the BCG vaccination, or for those who are immunocompromised.*





Tuberculin Skin Test	T-SPOT® .TB Test
How is the test administered?	
Injection into the skin on the inner surface of the forearm	Blood sample is taken
How is the test read?	
Return to the office/ clinic 48 -72 hours after administration	Test is performed by a laboratory that reports the result to your doctor/clinic
How many visits are required?	
Two	One
What if I've had the BCG vaccine?	
Accuracy of the test may be affected	Accuracy of the test is not affected

What happens if my test result is positive?

A positive test may mean that you have either latent or active TB. Your doctor will advise you on whether any additional testing, such as a chest x-ray, is needed.

*Always consult your doctor for additional advice. For more information visit www.tspot.com or www.cdc.gov.

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