# 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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