



Tuberculosis FACT SHEET

Tuberculosis Prevention and Control

BCG

What is BCG?

BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guérin) is a live vaccine that was developed by two French scientists Calmette and Guérin in the 1920s. It helps protect babies and young children against the most severe forms of *TB disease*. BCG is one of the most common vaccines in the world. It is frequently used in other countries where *TB infection* and *TB disease* are more common.

In Canada, children in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec received BCG routinely until the 1980s. Today, only some First Nations children on reserves receive BCG routinely.

People vaccinated with BCG may have a positive reaction to a *TB skin test*. This reaction may be due to the BCG vaccine or to a real *TB infection*. The reaction from BCG fades over time, and adults who were vaccinated as children should consider a positive skin test as true *TB infection*. Adults who had many BCG vaccinations, or who were vaccinated after the age of 6 years, may have a positive TB skin test because of BCG. However, it is safest to have further testing to rule out *TB disease*.

