



Tuberculosis FACT SHEET

Tuberculosis Prevention and Control

TB skin test

A TB skin test looks for *TB infection*. TB proteins are injected under the surface of the skin. If a person is infected with TB, a hard swelling (induration) will develop at the site of the injection in 48 to 72 hours. A health care professional must measure the size of the reaction and tell you if the test is positive.

A positive test

A positive TB skin test usually means that you have *TB infection*. More tests should be done to make sure you don't have *TB disease*. Your doctor may order a chest x-ray or a test of your sputum (phlegm) to look for TB bacteria. A positive test without TB infection can happen in people who have been vaccinated with *BCG* or who have been infected with other TB-like mycobacteria.

A negative test

A negative TB skin test usually means a person is not infected with TB. A negative test can happen in a person who has been recently infected. It usually takes 2 to 12 weeks after exposure to a person with *infectious TB disease* for the skin test to become positive.

A negative test can also happen in an infected person who has a weakened immune system. If you have *TB and HIV infection* or *TB disease*, your skin test may be negative even if the TB germ is in your body.