

MANTOUX TEST

Patient: What is Mantoux test?

Doctor: Mantoux test is also known as TB screening test or tuberculin sensitivity test.

Patient: What is it for?

Doctor: The Mantoux test is used as a screening tool for tuberculosis infection or disease and as an aid to diagnosis. The Mantoux skin test is used to see if your child has been infected with the germs (bacilli) that cause tuberculosis (TB). It is important to detect TB early so that treatment can be started as soon as possible.

Patient: Who can get tested for this?

Doctor: TB screening tests are not used as a general population screens but are used to screen certain people who are at high risk for TB exposure, such as:

- Those who have signs and symptoms consistent with active tuberculosis
- Those with diseases or conditions that weaken the immune system, such as those with HIV or AIDS that make them more vulnerable to a TB infection
- Those who are in confined living conditions such as homeless shelters, migrant farm camps, nursing homes, schools, and correctional facilities
- Health care workers and others whose occupations bring them in close contact with those who may have active TB
- Those who have been in close contact with someone who has an active case of TB
- Those who come from or have lived for a period of time in a foreign country where TB may be more common
- Those who inject illegal drugs

TB screening tests are also used sometimes as part of a routine examination prior to starting school or a new job. Since mothers can pass TB to their unborn children, pregnant women are sometimes screened.

Patient: When is the test ordered?

Doctor: TB screening tests are ordered when a doctor wants to screen a person for a exposure to TB. They may be done yearly in those who are part of a high-risk group, either because they have a disease that weakens their immune system or because they work or live around others in high-risk groups. They are frequently done prior to a person joining an at-risk population, such as going to college or becoming a teacher or health care worker.

Patient: Is there any test preparation needed?

Doctor: No, there isn't test preparation needed.

Patient: How is it done?

Doctor: This test is given by an injection between the layers of the skin, usually on the inside of the left forearm using a small sterile needle and syringe. The test is performed on a person's skin. A purified protein derivative (PPD) solution that contains *M. tuberculosis* antigens, but not live bacteria, is used to provoke a hypersensitivity skin reaction (a red raised bump) in those who have been infected by TB. A health care worker will wipe the inner forearm with alcohol and let the skin dry. Using a 1cc syringe and a tiny needle, he will inject a small amount of PPD solution just under the first layer of the skin. When done correctly, the injection forms a small bubble of fluid that looks like a blister.

Patient: When is the site evaluated?

Doctor: The site should be left uncovered and undisturbed. The site must be examined by a health care worker at 48 and/or 72 hours to see if a local skin reaction has occurred.

Patient: Should I get a TB screening test if I am pregnant?

Doctor: You may be tested under your doctor's supervision if there is a need to do so. Since TB can be passed from mother to child through the amniotic fluid during pregnancy, if you are at an increased risk of contracting TB, your doctor may want you to have a TST or IGRA done. Either of these is considered safe during pregnancy.

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Patient: Is there anything else I should know doctor?

Doctor: Yes, once someone has had a positive TB skin test, it is not necessary to have another one the next time there is a question of exposure to TB. A TST reaction will usually remain positive, and the skin reaction to subsequent tuberculin skin tests may become increasingly severe.

A negative TST may cause mild itching or discomfort at the injection site. A person may not respond to a TB skin test (even with TB exposure) if she has had a recent viral infection, a "live" vaccine (such as measles, mumps, chickenpox, influenza), or has overwhelming tuberculosis, another bacterial infection, or is taking immune suppressive drugs such as corticosteroids.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. In your own words, can you tell me how the test is performed?**
- 2. How important is early detection of tuberculosis?**
- 3. Can everyone have the screening test?**