

# Tuberculosis (TB) Skin Test

## 1 Administration



- 1. Locate** the injection site
  - Place the forearm palm side up
  - Select an area 2 to 4 inches below the elbow that is free of tattoos, scars or wounds)
  - Clean the injection site using an alcohol swab
- 2. Prepare** the tuberculin
  - Check the tuberculin expiration date
  - Use a 1ml tuberculin syringe with a 1/2 inch 26 or 27 gauge needle
  - Withdraw 0.1 ml (5 tuberculin units) of tuberculin
  - Administer tuberculin immediately once it is drawn
- 3. Inject** the tuberculin
  - Insert the needle with the bevel up just below the skin's surface at a 5° to 15° angle
  - Inject the tuberculin – a wheal will form
- 4. Check** the injection site
  - Ensure a 5 mm wheal appears
  - Repeat test 2 to 4 inches from the original site if the wheal is not 5 mm or more
- 5. Document** the test which includes:
  - location (i.e. left or right forearm)
  - tuberculin lot number
  - tuberculin expiration date
  - date & time test administered
  - signature of health care professional

## 2 Reading



The skin test must be read 48 to 72 hours after administration. If this "window" is missed, the TB skin test may have to be re-administered.

- 1. Inspect**
  - Inspect the skin test site under good lighting
  - Note **induration** (hard, dense, raised formation)
- 2. Palpate**
  - Use fingertips to find the edges of the induration
- 3. Mark**
  - Mark the edges across the forearm with a pen
- 4. Measure**
  - Using a ruler place the "0" line on one marked edge
  - Read the gradation where the other marked edge falls across the forearm
  - Measure induration **NOT** erythema/redness
- 5. Record induration in mm**
  - Do **NOT** record as simply positive or negative
  - If there is no induration, record result as 0 mm

## 3 Interpretation

Interpreting a TB skin test depends on two factors:

- Size of induration measured in mm.
- Risk for being infected with TB and risk of developing active TB disease.

All clients with significant immunocompromise (including HIV) are at high risk for developing TB disease and should be seen by an ID Specialist or TB clinic.

### TST Reaction

#### Size (at least)

#### Results Are Significant (Considered Positive) For:

0 - 4 mm

- Patient with significant immunocompromise **WITH** other TB risk factor(s)

5 - 9 mm

- Household or close contact of a TB case
- Patient with abnormal chest radiograph

≥ 10 mm

- Patient who is healthy with no known TB risk factors

### Reporting Requirements

Positive TB skin tests AND suspect or confirmed TB cases must be reported to Toronto Public Health.

**TB medications** for prophylaxis and treatment are **FREE** through public health.

### For more information:

TB Prevention and Control Program

416-338-7600

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toronto.ca/health

