



National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment  
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

# *TB* source and contact tracing



**An important part of tuberculosis (TB) prevention is source and contact tracing. The aim of source and contact tracing is to trace and treat people infected with TB bacteria as quickly as possible. This stops them from developing TB themselves. This leaflet tells you more about source and contact tracing.**

## Go for screening if you receive an invitation

If the Municipal Public Health Service (GGD) invites you to be tested for TB, make sure to go.

TB is a serious disease caused by bacteria. It is important to know whether or not you carry the bacteria. It is important for your own health and that of the people around you. The disease can be prevented with medication.

## What is source and contact tracing?

If someone has pulmonary TB (affecting the lungs), they can infect other people. The infection is spread through the air, for example by coughing or sneezing. That is why the GGD tests people who have been in close contact with an infectious person. This is called contact tracing.

The aim of contact tracing is to trace and treat people infected with TB bacteria as quickly as possible. This prevents those people from developing TB. In some cases, one of these close contacts may already have the disease. Early tracing prevents further spreading.

Sometimes, the source of the infection is traced in the same way. This is called source tracing.



Figure 1. Source and Contact Investigation

## Who are tested?

Together with the patient, the GGD nurse draws up a list of people the patient has been in contact with. These could be family, friends, colleagues or people at school or sports clubs. The GGD ensures that the data obtained are treated confidentially.

People who have frequently been in contact with the patient for a longer period of time are tested first. If testing reveals that these contacts are infected with TB bacteria, other contacts, who had less or less frequent contact, are also tested. Do you think you should be tested but you have not been invited for testing? You can contact the GGD yourself.

## When are the tests carried out?

TB testing is only reliable if carried out eight weeks after the last contact with a TB patient. Contacts may be invited for a first test if the patient has had a persistent cough for a long time. A second test will then be done eight weeks after the last contact.

## For whom is testing important?

TB can develop more rapidly in people with reduced immunity. Always contact the TB department of the GGD in your region if you:

- have any symptoms that could indicate TB;
- have reduced immunity due to illness or medication;
- have children under the age of five who have been in contact with the patient.

### **The most common symptoms of TB are:**

- **coughing;**
- **weight loss or loss of appetite;**
- **high temperature (fever);**
- **night sweats.**

## How are you tested for TB?

There are several ways of testing for TB. The tests are safe. They are also safe for children or if you are pregnant.

### • **A tuberculin skin test (Mantoux test)**

The test involves injecting a small amount of fluid into the skin on the outside of the left forearm. A GGD employee will assess the skin reaction after two to three days. A skin reaction, such as a small bump, could indicate that you are infected with TB bacteria.

### • **A blood test (IGRA)**

This involves taking a blood sample. The blood is sent to a laboratory for testing. This test could indicate that you are infected with TB bacteria. The results will be available after two to three weeks.

- **A chest X-ray (of the lungs)**

A chest X-ray (of the lungs) can quickly identify any abnormalities that could indicate TB. The result of the X-ray should be available within a few days.

## What do we do with your data?

The GGD follows the rules of the law in handling your personal data that are stored in your medical file. Your data may be used anonymously to monitor and improve the quality of the programme.

## Any questions, tips, complaints or compliments about the screening?

- Please contact the TB prevention department of the GGD in your region. You can find the contact details on [www.ggd.nl](http://www.ggd.nl) and in the vaccination invitation. GGDs have a complaints procedure.
- For more information about TB, go to [www.rivm.nl/tuberculose](http://www.rivm.nl/tuberculose).

This information is available in English at:

Xogtaan oo Soomaali ah waxaa laga heli karaa:

Te informacje można znaleźć w języku polskim na stronie:

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[www.rivm.nl/en/tuberculosis/information-materials](http://www.rivm.nl/en/tuberculosis/information-materials)

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