



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

Skin test and blood test **Tuberculosis (TB)**



Why is screening necessary?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious disease caused by bacteria. The disease occurs worldwide. Even if you are not ill, you could still be infected by TB bacteria. This is called a TB infection. Treating a TB infection can prevent TB at a later stage.

Who will be screened?

The letter inviting you to take part in the screening programme explains why you (or your child) have been asked to be screened. Possible reasons include:

- You (or your child) come from a country with high rates of TB.
- You (or your child) are in or have had contact with someone suffering from or infected with TB.
- You (or your child) suffer from reduced immunity, for example due to HIV or medication that weakens the immune system. People with a reduced immunity who already have TB bacteria in their body (TB infection) are at a higher risk of developing TB.
- You work with groups of people from areas with high rates of TB.
- You travel to a country with high rates of TB.

How does the screening work?

You will be asked to fill in a questionnaire about your general health beforehand. A skin test and/or a blood test will then be taken. These tests can show whether your body recognises TB bacteria and whether you may be infected. If necessary, we will take a chest X-ray to be absolutely sure that you do not have TB.

The questionnaire will tell us whether:

- you have any symptoms that could be caused by TB;
- you have an increased risk of developing TB.

The questionnaire is important to assess the test results correctly.

The skin and blood tests are safe, also for children and pregnant women.

The skin test

From test to result

1 The skin test

For the skin test, we inject a small amount of fluid into the skin on the outside of the left forearm. You will gradually see a small bump develop. This is normal. The bump should disappear after a few minutes, sometimes a little longer.



After the skin test, you will be informed about a follow-up appointment at the Municipal Public Health Service (GGD). We will then see whether your body has reacted to the test. This will be after two to three days.

2 Wait for the assessment

It will be two to three days before we can measure a possible reaction to the skin test.



It is important that you do not rub or scratch the site of the injection. You must also not apply a plaster to it.

3 The result

Go to your appointment at the GGD for the result. An employee will feel whether your skin has reacted.



The appointment with the GGD is after two to three days. After that, any reaction can no longer be assessed and the test would have to be repeated, so it is important that you come to the GGD at the agreed time.

What could the result be?

You can receive one of two results:

The skin test is negative

No reaction was measured. At this time, there is no evidence of a TB infection.

The skin test is positive

A reaction was measured. This can mean three things:

1. You are infected with TB bacteria, but are not or not yet ill with the disease.
2. You have TB.
3. Your test was positive for another reason.

Further testing is necessary to identify the precise cause of a positive test.

A chest X-ray is always taken to exclude TB. In some cases, a blood test is done.

The doctor will discuss with you what should be done.

The blood test

From test to result

1 The blood test

A blood sample must be taken to test for TB.
This is how a blood test is done:

Step 1. An employee will put an elastic band around your arm.



Step 2. The employee will now take a few vials of blood.



Step 3. The employee will then apply a cotton-wool pad/gauze to the skin.



2 The laboratory analysis

Your blood will be sent to the laboratory.



The lab will test the blood for a possible TB infection.



3 The result

You will usually get the result two to three weeks after the blood test.



What could the result be?

You can receive one of two results:

The blood test is negative

No antibodies against TB bacteria were found in your blood.
This means that you are not infected with TB bacteria.

The blood test is positive

Antibodies against TB bacteria were found in your blood.
This could mean two things:

- You are infected with TB bacteria, but you are not (yet) ill with the disease.
- You (may) have TB.

What happens if the test result is positive?

If the result of the blood test is positive, further testing may be necessary. The doctor will discuss with you whether you have TB or have been infected with TB. They will discuss with you what should be done.

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.

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 and in the vaccination invitation. GGDs have a complaints procedure.

For more information about TB, go to www.rivm.nl/tuberculose.

This information is available in English at:

Waxaad warbixintan ku aqrisan kartaa Soomaaliga:

Informacje te są dostępne w języku polskim na stronie:

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شما میتوانید این معلومات را به دریاژ طریق ذیل مطالعه کنید:

يمكنك قراءة هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية على:



www.rivm.nl/en/TB-information#skintest



Ask your question to the TB chatbot:

www.tuberculosis.nl/over-tuberculosis

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