

WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that most often affects the lungs and is caused by a type of bacteria. It spreads through the air when infected people cough, sneeze or spit. TB sometimes affects other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine. If left untreated, TB disease can be fatal.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LATENT TB INFECTION AND TB DISEASE?

People with Latent TB Infection, LTBI, have dormant (sleeping) TB germs in their body and do not feel sick. A chest x-ray is usually normal and the disease cannot spread to others. It is recommended to take medication to prevent developing TB disease.

People with TB disease become **sick** from the large number of TB germs that are active in their body. They usually have one or more of the symptoms of the disease, and can spread the bacteria to others.

- TB disease needs to be treated with medicine.
- If NOT treated, a person with TB disease can have serious health complications that can be fatal.

UNDERSTANDING MY RESULTS

A negative test usually means you are not infected with TB, however, the test may be falsely negative if your immune system is not working properly or if you were recently infected.

It usually takes 2 to 8 weeks after exposure to a person with TB disease for your immune system to produce a response to the test.

Your health care team will let you know if you need another test.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON TB

Florida Department of Health in Alachua County's Tuberculosis Control Program

352-225-4188

352-955-6464, Fax

Alachua.FloridaHealth.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC.gov/TB

Revised 07/2024



GET THE FACTS ABOUT TUBERCULOSIS



DO I NEED A TB TEST?

Talk to your health care provider about getting a TB test if you:

- Have been in close contact with someone who has active TB disease.
- Have HIV infection, or a weakened immune system.
- Have symptoms of TB disease such as fever, night sweats, cough, or weight loss.
- Have lived in a country where many people have TB.
- Live or work in a nursing home, clinic, hospital, prison, or homeless shelter.
- Use illegal drugs.

WHAT TYPES OF TB TESTING ARE OFFERED?

There are currently two types of TB testing, TB blood test or TB skin test.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved two blood tests for TB infections. These are called Interferon-Gamma Release Assays or IGRAs:

- QuantiFERON® - TB Gold In-Tube (QFT-GIT)
- SPOT® (T-Spot) - **NOT OFFERED AT DOH-Alachua**

SHOULD I GET A TB BLOOD OR SKIN TEST?

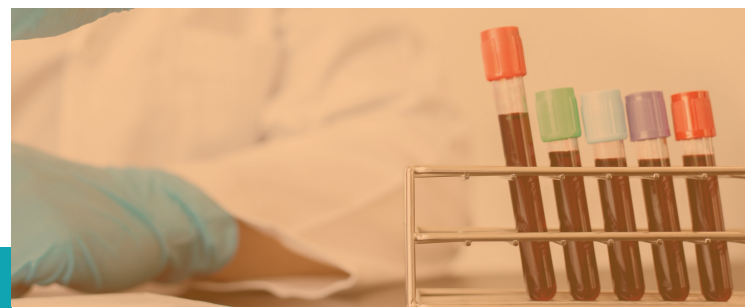
In most cases, you can have either a TB blood or skin test. The skin test is preferred over IGRAs for children less than 5 years of age.

Based on your situation, your provider will determine which test is right for you.

- A blood test will require one laboratory visit.
- With a skin test, you will need two visits, the first one is to place the test and 48–72 hours later, you will return to have the area of skin evaluated and receive your results.

COMPARING BLOOD AND SKIN TESTING

Comparison	TST	IGRA
Use to detect TB infection	YES	YES
Use to diagnose TB disease	NO	NO
Need 1 laboratory visit	NO	YES
Less costly	YES	NO
Better for those with BCG vaccine history	NO	YES



WHERE CAN I GET A TB TEST?

You can get a skin or blood test from your health care provider or local health department. Ask your provider and find out which one is right for you. You may need to go to a laboratory for testing.

WHAT IF I HAD A BCG VACCINE?

Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG), is a vaccine for TB. The vaccine is not widely used in the United States, but it is often given to infants and small children in other countries where TB is common.

The BCG vaccine is not effective at protecting adults against TB. You can still get TB infection or TB disease even if you were vaccinated with BCG.

Let your health care provider know if you were previously vaccinated with the BCG TB vaccine.