Tuberculosis (TB) Testing

TB skin testing (Mantoux) is a two-part process: the test solution is given to the student using a very tiny needle in the arm; 2 days later the test is “read” to check for reaction.

About the TB (Mantoux) Test

The Mantoux (pronounced ‘Man-two’) skin test can show if a person has ever been exposed and infected by tuberculosis (TB) germs. TB infection does not mean the person has the disease, but if someone has been infected there is a chance that they may get sick with TB in the future.

The Mantoux test is a simple and safe test. It is NOT a vaccination. A small amount of liquid is injected just under the top layer of skin on a person’s arm using a tiny sterile needle and syringe. Forty-eight to 72 hours later the skin reaction, if any, is measured and the result is recorded. An interpretation is made by a trained health care professional as to whether the test is positive or negative.

NOTE: If you have recently had a vaccination containing a live virus, such as MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), nasal spray type Influenza (flu) vaccine, or Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine, you must wait 4-6 weeks after vaccination before a TB test can be given in order to avoid false negative reactions. If you are having the TB test because you may have been exposed to TB, you must wait 10-12 weeks for the test to be reliable.

BCG

A TB test can be performed regardless of whether or not you had BCG in the past.
Positive TB Tests

If your test is interpreted as positive, you will need an evaluation by a health provider, either one at the Health Service or your Primary Care Provider, to rule out active tuberculosis and recommend a course of treatment or further evaluation. Blood will be drawn and sent to the lab to confirm the result of your TB skin test. If this test is positive, a chest x-ray will be ordered to rule out Active (contagious) Tuberculosis. Once Active Tuberculosis is ruled out, you are not contagious and will be permitted to participate in classroom field/clinical experiences. However if your TB test is positive and your chest x-ray is negative, you may be diagnosed with Latent Tuberculosis (noncontagious) and offered medication to treat this infection. The nurse practitioner will discuss this with you. If your TB test is positive and your chest x-ray is positive, the New Jersey Department of Health will be notified as required by law and you will be referred off-campus for treatment. To learn more about Tuberculosis and TB skin testing, please visit the CDC website at http://www.cdc.gov/tb/.