

Tuberculosis (TB) SCREENING



Screening is a process to identify people who are at risk of having a health problem or disease.

TB (tuberculosis) screening includes a variety of tests that can identify people who may have **TB infection** (also known as latent TB) caused by the bacteria, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

A person with TB infection does not usually become sick and cannot spread it to other people as the bacteria is considered dormant (or 'sleeping'). In some people, TB bacteria can become active and cause **TB disease**.

Who needs TB screening?

TB screening is recommended for people who have:

- been in contact with a person diagnosed with TB
- lived in a community or setting where TB has been recently confirmed
- migrated from a high-risk country for TB (especially in healthcare students or workers)
- a high risk of exposure to TB whilst at work (such as healthcare workers).

TB screening may be performed before receiving the bacille Calmette-Guérin (or BCG) vaccine to check if someone has been exposed to the TB bacteria in the past.

While the overall risk of TB to travellers is low, a doctor or nurse can provide advice on TB screening before or after travel to high risk countries for TB.

What are the types of TB tests?

Testing for TB infection can include:



A specialised blood test (called IGRA), or



A skin test (called TST) where a liquid is injected into the patient's forearm

A nurse or doctor will advise which test is recommended.

Interferon-Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) blood test

The IGRA test is a common test for TB infection that requires a blood sample.

Contacts of TB and healthcare workers may need repeat testing with IGRA. A nurse or doctor will advise if this is required.

Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)

The TST (also known as the Mantoux test) is performed by injecting a small part of the TB bacteria, just under the skin surface on the inner forearm. This causes a small lump at the injection site, which may cause a skin reaction over the next few days but depends on whether the patient has been previously exposed to TB bacteria.

People who have a TST are required to return to their clinic 2 to 3 days later (minimum of 48 hours) for a doctor or nurse to check their reaction to the test.

TB testing and any follow-up care is free through Queensland Health TB services.



Further information:
www.health.qld.gov.au/tuberculosis



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