

Anne Arundel County Department of Health Communicable Diseases

Phone: 410-222-7256
www.aahealth.org



The services and facilities of Anne Arundel County Department of Health are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, political affiliation or opinion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

(Adapted from the brochure, "What you need to know about TB" developed by the New York City Department of Health Division of TB Control.)

My Health Center

Phone:

Address:

Hours:

Other:

Anne Arundel County Clinics:


Glen Burnie Health Center: 410-222-6633

Parole Health Center: 410-222-4438



The TB Skin Test

The TB Skin Test: What You Need to Know



The *Tuberculin Skin Test*, also known as the TST, is a test that shows if you have tuberculosis (TB) germs in your body. It is important to know if you are infected with TB germs because these germs can cause TB, a serious disease that can hurt your lungs and other organs.

Tell me more about the TST.

The tuberculin skin test involves 2 steps:

1. Placement of the TST on your arm by a specially trained health professional.
2. Reading of the TST result by a trained health professional 48–72 hours after placement.

Then what?

Most people with TB germs in their bodies will have a “positive” tuberculin skin test. If you have a “positive” result, you will need to get some more tests (such as a chest X-ray) to see if the TB germs are hurting your lungs. People with TB germs in their bodies often need to take medicine to help their bodies kill the TB germs. If you have a “negative” test, then you most likely do not have TB germs in your body, but you may need a second test 10-12 weeks after you last spent time with an infectious person.

Should I get a TST?

You should talk to a health care professional about getting a TST if you:

- ✓ Have symptoms of active TB (coughing for 3 weeks or more, fever or chills, sweating at night, appetite loss, weight loss)
- ✓ Have spent a long time with someone who is sick with TB
- ✓ Have come to the United States recently from a country with a lot of people with TB

- ✓ Live or work in a prison, homeless shelter, nursing home, or other similar group setting
- ✓ Have HIV/AIDS, diabetes or chronic kidney failure
- ✓ Are a child born in a country with a lot of TB and are entering the Anne Arundel County school system for the first time.

If you have had a "positive" skin test in the past, please let your nurse know.

Anything else I need to know about the TST?

Side effects from the TST are rare. If you have a positive skin test, sometimes the test site may swell and feel uncomfortable; the swelling should go away in 2 weeks. The skin test site may also itch. If this happens, put a cold compress on the test site. Never scratch the test site or put a bandage on it.

What if I had the BCG vaccine?

The BCG vaccine usually does not protect people against TB. Even if you had the vaccine, you can still become infected with the TB germ. Therefore, you may still need a TST. Talk to a health care professional for more information.

TB Can Be Prevented. TB Can Be Cured.

How can the Department of Health help me?

If you think you have been exposed to TB, you should get a TB skin test (TST). We have clinics in the county that provide free and confidential TB services, including testing and treatment. We have interpreters available. We can answer your questions about TB. At our clinics you do not need health insurance, and you do not need to worry about immigration. Your health is our primary concern.