

Fact Sheet

Mantoux skin test Also known as the Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)

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The Mantoux (pronounced Man-too) skin test is used to see if your child has been infected with the germs (bacilli) that cause tuberculosis (TB). It is important to detect TB early so that treatment can be started as soon as possible.

How is it done?

This test is given by an injection between the layers of the skin, usually on the inside of the left forearm using a small sterile needle and syringe. It is not uncommon for your child's doctor to ask for a test to be done in both forearms. The double test results will then be able to tell the difference between human tuberculosis infection and infection caused by a bacilli (atypical) found in the environment. The atypical infection can cause swollen lymph glands (lumps) in young children. This atypical form of infection is not TB and is not spread from person to person and does not make you or your child sick but it may need treatment.

Results of the test

A positive reaction is measured by the size of the lump (induration) that forms where the injection was put into your child's arm. This lump occurs over the next two to three days. Your child may have a positive skin test reaction if they:

- Have had tuberculosis before and have been cured.
- Have been exposed to the tuberculosis bacteria or have been immunised for tuberculosis (BCG).
- Have tuberculosis.

A negative result may actually be incorrect (false negative) if your child:

- Is taking medicine to lower your immunity eg. steroids or chemotherapy drugs.

- Has a viral illness eg. measles, mumps or rubella.
- Has been vaccinated with live attenuated viruses within the last month eg measles.
- Is very sick.

After the test

If your child has a Mantoux test, you will need to bring them back in two or three days to have the result of the test checked. The reaction can get itchy but scratching the test site may cause an infection, so it is best to encourage your child not to touch it. Band-aids, bandages and ointments can affect the test results, so it is important to keep the skin clear and uncovered (long sleeves and jumpers can be worn). If your child gets blisters around the spot where the injection was given, do not break them.

Your child may do all normal daily activities eg. playing sports, having a shower, going to school.

If you know your child has had a positive Mantoux test before or has been immunised for TB please let the person doing the test know. If you have any questions ask the person who is doing the test.

If the test is positive then your child may need to have a chest X-ray and see a doctor or a nurse.

Remember

- A positive result does not necessarily mean your child has tuberculosis.
- It is important to detect TB early to start treatment.
- A Mantoux test is safe.



This fact sheet is for education purposes only.
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional
to make sure this information is right for your child.

This document was reviewed on Thursday, 1 June 2006.

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