

The

Mantoux

Test

Mantoux

Mantoux

Mantoux Test

The Mantoux Test

What is the Mantoux test?

The Mantoux test is a skin test to detect whether or not a person has been infected by the tubercle bacillus (TB germ). It is also called a tuberculin test.

Why is it done?

It is generally carried out as an investigation for suspected tuberculosis, as a prerequisite for BCG vaccination and as a baseline before employment in a health care facility or high-TB risk region.

How is it done?

The test is done by injecting a tiny amount of a sterile protein solution (prepared from killed TB germs cultured in the laboratory) into the skin of the forearm. A small weal forms at the site of injection. The result is read in 48 to 72 hours and the area should not be scratched or rubbed during this period.

What does a positive reaction mean?

A positive reaction in someone without previous BCG vaccination means the person has been infected by the TB germ. We do not know from the test when and how this happened and we cannot tell whether the TB is active or has healed.

That is why a chest X-ray will be taken to make sure. Other germs that are not TB sometimes cause a positive test in Western Australia.

What does a negative result mean?

A negative result means the person has not been infected by the TB germ up to about six weeks before the test is done. If the person had recent contact with TB, a second test will be needed in six to 12 weeks' time. A false negative test may occur if the person (a) had MMR or OPV vaccination within the past month or BCG a long time ago, (b) is under-nourished or recovering from a recent acute illness or (c) is HIV-positive or having treatments that suppress the immune system.

Are there any side-effects from the test?

The test's side-effects are mainly related to the size of the reaction and include local swelling, itchiness and discolouration that may take a few weeks to clear. Very strong reactions are uncommon and may be associated with a painful swelling of several centimetres in size, blistering or ulceration and red streaks in the arm. They all heal eventually with negligible scarring. Fever is exceptionally rare.

Please contact the clinic if you need more information.



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia

Produced by Communicable Diseases Control
Program with assistance from
Marketing and Campaign Support
Population Health Division,
Department of Health 2002
HP 9249