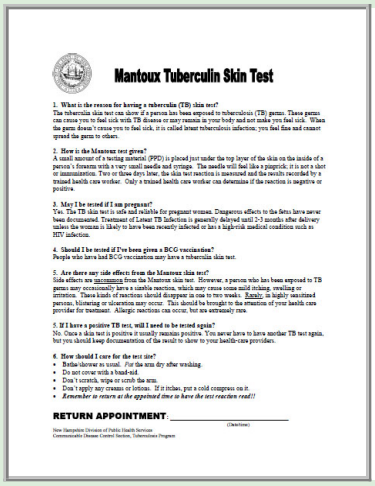

Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test

1. What is the reason for having a tuberculin (TB) skin test?
The tuberculin skin test can show if a person has been exposed to tuberculosis (TB) germs. These germs can cause you to feel sick with TB disease or may remain in your body and not make you feel sick. When the germs doesn't cause you to feel sick, it is called latent tuberculosis infection; you feel fine and cannot spread the germs to others.

2. How is the Mantoux test given?
A small amount of a testing material (PPD) is placed just under the top layer of the skin on the inside of a person's forearm with a very small needle and syringe. The needle will feel like a pinprick; it is not a shot or immunization. Two or three days later, the skin test reaction is measured and the results recorded by a trained health care worker. Only a trained health care worker can determine if the reaction is negative or positive.

3. May I be tested if I am pregnant?
Yes. The TB skin test is safe and reliable for pregnant women. Dangerous effects to the fetus have never been documented. Treatment of Latent TB Infection is generally delayed until 2-3 months after delivery unless the woman is likely to have been recently infected or has a high-risk medical condition such as HIV infection.

4. Should I be tested if I've been given a BCG vaccination?
People who have had BCG vaccination may have a tuberculin skin test.

5. Are there any side effects from the Mantoux skin test?
Side effects are uncommon from the Mantoux skin test. However, a person who has been exposed to TB germs may occasionally have a similar reaction, which may cause some mild itching, swelling or irritation. These kinds of reactions should disappear in one to two weeks. Rarely, in highly sensitized persons, blistering or ulceration may occur. This should be brought to the attention of your health care provider for treatment. Allergic reactions can occur, but are extremely rare.

5. If I have a positive TB test, will I need to be tested again?
No. Once a skin test is positive it usually remains positive. You never have to have another TB test again, but you should keep documentation of the result to show to your health-care providers.

6. How should I care for the test site?
- Bathe/shower as usual. *For* the area dry after washing.
- Do not cover with a band-aid.
- Don't scratch, wipe or scrub the area.
- Don't apply any creams or lotions. If it itches, put a cold compress on it.
- ***Remember to return at the appointed time to have the test reaction read!!***

RETURN APPOINTMENT: _____
(Date/time)

New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services
Communicable Disease Control Section, Tuberculosis Program

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