

MANTOUX TUBERCULIN SKIN TEST

- **WHAT IS IT?**

A test to determine if the bacteria that cause tuberculosis are present in your body.

- **WHO SHOULD GET IT?**

Anyone at risk for being exposed to tuberculosis should be tested periodically. This includes among others health care workers, day care providers, prison workers, and school employees.

- **WHO SHOULD NOT GET IT?**

Anyone who has previously tested positive to a Mantoux test should consult his or her doctor. If you are pregnant, check with your physician before receiving this test.

- **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

A small amount (.1ml) of TB "protein derivative" is placed just beneath the skin of the forearm, forming a small bubble (wheal). **YOU CANNOT ACQUIRE TB FROM THIS TEST!**

The testing solution interacts with your body tissues. If the bacteria are present, a positive reaction will occur 48-72 hours later. This reaction is in the form of swelling (induration) around the injection site. Redness &/or bruising, without induration, does not indicate a positive reaction.

The skin test must be read by a qualified, trained professional.

- **WHAT IF THERE IS A POSITIVE REACTION?**

A positive reaction does not necessarily mean that you have tuberculosis. It does, however, mean that you have been exposed to the bacteria, and thus have the potential to develop the disease. You will be referred to your own physician, and/or the Olmsted County Public Health Department for follow-up care.

TUBERCULOSIS FACTS

Tuberculosis (**TB**) is an airborne infection caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Although TB primarily affects the lungs, other organs and tissues may be affected as well. Until recently, the incidence of TB had been decreasing in the United States. However, in the second half of the 1980's, the trend reversed and the rate began to climb. It is estimated that 64,000 excess cases of TB have occurred in the U.S. between 1985 and 1993.

- TB is spread by an airborne germ. Therefore, someone with TB can spread the germ by coughing, sneezing, laughing, or singing. Repeated exposure to someone with TB disease is generally necessary before a person will become infected. TB germs cannot be spread by touch or the sharing of utensils used by an infected person.
- It is important to understand that there is a difference between being infected with TB and having TB disease. Someone who is infected with TB has the TB germs, or bacteria in their body. The body's defenses, though, are protecting them from the germs, and they are not sick. They cannot spread the infection to other people. Someone with TB disease is sick. If not properly treated, they can spread the disease to other people. A person with symptoms of TB disease or evidence of infection needs to be seen by a physician.
- Several symptoms are associated with TB, including:
 - Prolonged coughing (including coughing up of blood),
 - Repeated night sweats,
 - Unexplained weight loss,
 - Loss of appetite,
 - Fever,
 - Chills,
 - General lethargy.Because these signs may also be indicative of other diseases as well, a person must consult a physician to determine the cause of these symptoms.
- Most TB can be cured. There are drugs that can kill the germs that cause TB, but a person must continually take the prescribed medication, usually for four to six months. Some patients require a year or more for successful treatment.