

Tuberculin Skin Test: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- The tuberculin skin test is a test to see if your body ever carried the germ that causes tuberculosis (TB). Tuberculosis is an infection that usually starts in the lungs. TB germs are easily spread to others when a person with TB coughs or sneezes. You may have breathed TB germs into your lungs. TB germs can live in your body without making you sick. But, you may get sick with TB later. The simplest way to tell if you have TB germs in your body is to have a skin test.
- During your TB test, a small amount of special liquid is put into your skin (usually on the forearm). Your skin **must** be checked 2 to 3 days after the test. Your skin test is positive if the area around the skin test is raised, red, or hard in 2 to 3 days. A negative test is when you have no skin changes in 2 to 3 days. In some people, the TB skin test may be negative even when they have TB. People who have an increased chance of getting TB will need another skin test 1 to 3 weeks after their first test. Ask your caregiver if you need more tests.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Return** or **call** in 2-3 days to see if there is a reaction to the skin test. The test is positive if there is a red bump about the size of a pencil eraser or bigger on your arm. Write down questions you have about TB. This way you'll remember to ask these questions during your next visit. It is **very important** to have your skin checked 2 to 3 days after the test. You could get tuberculosis if your test is positive and you do not get treatment.
- If the test is positive, this usually means that you have been exposed to the TB germ. You will need other tests to see if you have active TB that needs medical treatment. Other tests you may need are an x-ray picture of your lungs or sputum (spit) sample.
- If you have active TB, your caregiver will give you medicines to fight the infection. Even if you do not have active TB, you may need to take medicine to keep you from getting sick with TB later.
- If the test is negative, this usually means you are not infected. However, it takes 2 to 10 weeks after being around a person with TB for the skin test to be positive. You may need to get tested again in 1 to 3 weeks to make sure you do not have TB.
- If you are infected with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or other illnesses, your body may not react to a TB skin test. You may need other tests.

CALL 910-291-7680 IF:

- You have any questions or concerns about the results of your test.
- You have any of the following symptoms of active TB.
 - You start losing a lot of weight.
 - You feel weak or sick.
 - You have a temperature over _____ F (_____ C). You might even wake up at night covered with sweat.
 - You have chest pain and/or coughing. You might even cough up blood.