

How is two-step tuberculin skin testing done?

The two-step tuberculin skin test (TST) is used to detect individuals with past tuberculosis (TB) infection who now have diminished skin test reactivity. This procedure will reduce the likelihood that a boosted reaction is later interpreted as a new infection.

Four visits? Oh my!

The number of visits required may be reduced to **3** by using the following protocol:

Visit 1, Day 1

Place the 1st TST and have the employee return in 7 days for the test to be read. If the first test is positive, it indicates that the employee is infected with TB. Refer the employee for a chest x-ray and physician evaluation. An asymptomatic employee, whose chest x-ray indicates no active disease, may begin work.

Visit 2, Day 7

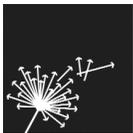
Place a 2nd TST on all employees whose 1st test is negative at 7 days.

Visit 3, Day 9 or 10

Read the 2nd test at 48-72 hours. A positive 2nd test indicates TB infection in the distant past. Refer the employee for a chest x-ray and physician evaluation. An asymptomatic employee, whose chest x-ray indicates no active disease, may begin work.

Sensitivity of this method

The majority of significant TST reactions will remain "positive" 7 days after application. Those that have diminished or disappeared by day 7 will be boosted back to positive by the 2nd TST. Reducing the number of visits from 4 to 3 will not reduce the sensitivity of the two-step TST.



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FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should receive a two-step TST?

New employees, at the time of hire, who will be tested periodically for TB infection and who:

- have never been tested; or
- have no documentation of prior testing; or
- do not remember being tested; or
- tested negative *over 12 months ago*.

This information is available at our website: www.nationaltbcenter.edu