

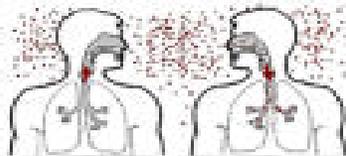
# TB skin test

## What is TB?

“TB” is short for a disease called tuberculosis.

## How do you get TB?

TB is spread by tiny germs that can float in the air. When a person with TB disease coughs, sneezes, or shouts they can spray these germs into the air. If another person breathes in these germs, they can get tuberculosis (TB). TB can make you feel tired, have a cough, fever and night sweats. Most people think that TB can only affect your lungs. Even though 70% of those infected with TB have the germs in their lungs, TB can infect other places in the body such as the bone, brain or kidneys.



## How can I find out if I have TB?

A simple skin test can tell if you have the TB germ in your body. This test is usually done on the arm. A small needle is used to place a testing fluid under the skin. A health care worker will look at the reaction 2 or 3 days later.

## How do I take care of my arm after the test?

- Do not cover the spot with a band-aid or tape.
- Do not rub or scratch the area.



## What if I have a negative TB skin test?

In most cases, if there is no bump where the testing fluid was placed you probably are not infected with TB.

## What if I have a positive TB test?

A positive test will look like a raised bump on your arm where the test was placed. This means that you probably have the TB germ in your body. The doctor may want to do other tests to see where the TB germ is in the body.

**It is important for a doctor or nurse to see your skin test 48-72 hours after it is placed**

## What if I had the BCG vaccine?

*Even if you had the BCG vaccine, you can have a TB skin test.*

- People who have had the BCG vaccine can still become infected with the TB germ.

## The good news!

If you know you have the germ, you can take medication to fight off the germ and stay healthy.



BPHC, TB Clinic, BMC Yawkey Bldg. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
850 Harrison Ave.  
Boston, MA 02118

Telephone: (617) 534-4967 (Appointments)  
(617) 534-4875 (Nurse)

**ENGLISH**

Updated 02/05