

English Script – Mantoux Test

This script is the English version of a Sango video found online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F74tk7NsWAQ&feature=youtu.be>

This short video will tell you information about the Mantoux test (also called the tuberculin skin test or “TST”). It is the name of the test to check for tuberculosis (also called TB). TB is an infection caused by the TB germ. It spreads between people and most commonly causes an infection of the lung. There are two ways that the TB germ usually infects people, one where people have the germ their body but does not usually make them sick, and one where the germ is in the body and is actively causing disease – this is called ‘active’ TB.

Active TB can make people very sick and if untreated can even result in death. This is why it is important to prevent and treat TB in our community.

Why do I need to get tested for tuberculosis?

All people arriving in Australia as a refugee will need to have the test because sometimes people can be infected with inactive TB germs without getting the actual active disease.

When TB germs are inactive, they do not make people sick and they cannot spread to other people. Because the person is not sick they may not be aware that they have TB germs in their body. If the TB germ becomes active, the person can get sick with TB disease and pass the sickness on to other people.

The Mantoux test can show if the person has ever had TB germs in their body. TB infection does not always mean the person has active disease, but if someone has been infected there is a chance they might get sick with active TB in the future. The Mantoux test result will not affect your visa but will help you to get any treatment you may need.

What does the test involve?

A Mantoux test is a simple and safe test that can be given at any age.

A small amount of harmless fluid is injected just under the top layer of the skin of your arm using a small sterile needle. The nurse will tell you to come back in 2 or 3 days for another appointment to get the results of the test.

Are there any side effects?

Side effects are uncommon. However, if you have been exposed to TB germs you may sometimes have a reaction, which may be a little sore or itchy.

It is best not to scratch the arm – a cold compress can help relieve any itching. Make sure you don’t put a bandage or lotion on the test spot. This swelling should disappear in about 2 weeks.

How do I get my test Results?

You will need to return to the clinic in 2 to 3 days to get your results. Your doctor or nurse will look at the test spot on your arm. They will measure any bump that appears there and let you know the result.

What does it mean if your test is negative?

It means you don’t have TB germs in your body OR TB germs are not showing up in your body at this time.

If your TB skin test is negative, you still may need to have more tests if:

- You have been around someone with TB disease.
- Your TB skin test was within 8 weeks of your exposure to TB.

- You have signs of TB disease, like coughing, chest pain, fever, weight, loss, or excessive tiredness.
- You have HIV infection, since the TB skin test may react differently.

What does it mean if your test is positive?

It means that you have TB germs in your body, but does not necessarily mean that you have active TB disease. You cannot pass TB onto anyone else unless you have an active lung infection.

You may need to get an x-ray of your chest or give a phlegm or blood sample. These extra tests are needed to see if you have the active disease, if you have active disease the doctor will discuss treatment with you. You do not have to pay for testing or treatment for TB in Queensland's public hospitals.

If there are no signs of active TB the doctor will discuss the possibility of taking medication to prevent the development of active TB disease.

You may be asked if you have HIV. TB infection and HIV together can make you very sick very quickly. If you don't know if you have HIV, the doctor or nurse may suggest you take an HIV test.

If tests show you have active TB, the good news is TB can be CURED if you follow the medicine plan you and your doctor set up.

Acknowledgements:

This project was developed by the Refugee Health Network Queensland. The script was reviewed by Clinicians at the Communicable Diseases and Infection management Unit, Communicable Diseases Branch. The script includes resources from:

NT Government <https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/health-conditions-treatments/bacterial/tuberculosis-tb/being-tested>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (USA)

The Australian Respiratory Council <https://www.thearc.org.au/>

Funding for the project was provided by Queensland Department of Health and the Communicable Diseases and Infection management Unit, Communicable Diseases Branch (July, 2019)