

# Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)

## Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Providers

### Before TST

July 2024

#### 1 Prepare client

- Confirm eligibility
- Obtain informed consent
- **Tell client to:**
  - Wait for 15 mins after injection
  - Return in 48-72 hours for test read

#### 2 Prepare supplies

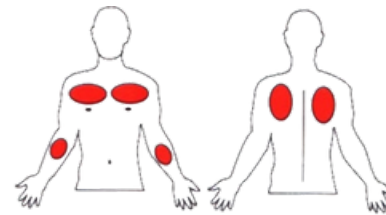
- ✓ Tubersol®, 1 ml syringe with 26 or 27 gauge ¼ to ½ inch needle
- ✓ Alcohol swab & cotton ball
- ✓ Documentation record
- ✓ Anaphylaxis kit and protocol

#### 3 Locate test site

- **Use inner part of the left forearm, 2-4 inches below the elbow**
- Avoid areas with extensive lesions, burns, eczema, rashes, visible veins. Avoid tattoos if possible
- Use alcohol swab to clean. Do not use topical numbing cream

#### Tubersol®:

Protect from light.  
Store between +2° to +8° C.  
Use opened vials within 30 days.  
Discard open vial if no date is noted.



Forearm & alternate testing sites

### Administering TST

#### 4 Load syringe

- Clean top of Tubersol® vial with alcohol swab
- Do not inject air
- **Withdraw 0.1mL from vial**
- Do not preload syringes

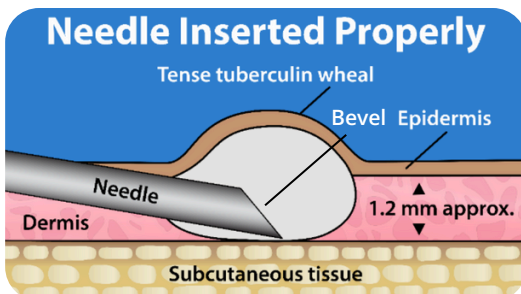
#### 5 Inject

- Hold the skin taut
- Position the needle bevel up, almost flat against the skin
- **Insert the needle at a 5° to 15° angle** until the entire bevel is under the skin
- Do not aspirate
- Slowly inject Tubersol®

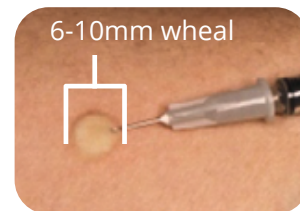
#### 6 Check

- **A 6-10mm diameter wheal should form** as you inject
- Use a cotton ball to gently blot any blood
- Do not cover test site with band aid

Source: Ottawa Public Health



**Intradermal injection tip:** The bevel of the needle should be visible just below the skin's surface.



If injected too deep, a wheal will **not** form.

If wheal does not form, or immediately disappears, repeat test on other forearm, or at least 2 to 4 inches below initial site.

### After TST

#### 7 Advise client

- Mild swelling, irritation, or bruising may occur
- Do not press or scratch the site
- If mild itching occurs, put a cold, wet cloth on the site
- Continue daily activities as normal

#### 8 Document

- Follow your agency's guidelines (Fill TB Screening Form or equivalent)

# Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)

## Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Providers



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

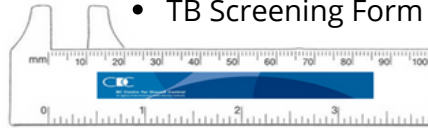
### Reading the TST

July 2024

The TST must be read within 48 - 72 hours of the test by a trained health care provider in person.

#### 1 Gather supplies

- Caliper or flexible ruler
- TB Screening Form



#### 2 Inspect

- Visually inspect the site under good lighting on a firm surface
- **Note induration (hard, dense, raised bump)**

#### 3 Palpate

- Use fingertips to lightly **sweep over the surface of the forearm** in a zig zag motion
- If present, find the edges of the induration

#### 4 Mark edges

- **Mark the edges of the induration with a pen**
- Do not measure redness or soft swelling
- Read across (from left to right), not up and down

#### 5 Measure

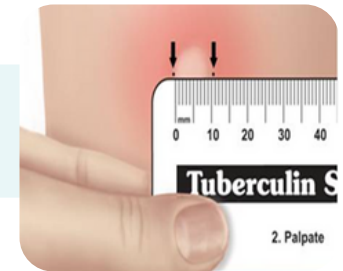
- Place the 0 mm on the ruler inside the left pen marking
- **Measure the distance between the pen marks in mm**
- Round down to the lower mm if between ruler lines (no decimals)



**Pen method:** Move the pen tip across the forearm at a 45° angle towards the test site. The tip will stop at the edge of the induration. If difficult, try holding pen at 90°.



Do not measure redness



**Refer to BCCDC TB Manual Section 4(b) for:**

- TST cut-off threshold points
- Special considerations for TST or IGRA testing

### Next steps

#### 6 Document

- Follow your agency's guidelines (Fill TB Screening Form or equivalent)
- **Record the size of induration** in mm
  - No induration is 0 mm
- **Record the result** as per [Section 4\(b\) Table 4: TST cut-off threshold points](#) (e.g., positive or negative)
- Note any adverse reactions

#### 7 Clinical decision-making

**If indicated by the BCCDC TB Manual Section 4(b):**

- Send the client for a chest x-ray
- Send the completed TB Screening Form to TB Services
- Report a serious adverse reaction per your agency policy

**Provide the client with a copy of their result.**

If indicated, explain why:

- they should not have another TST in the future
- they need to go for a chest x-ray
- a referral to TB Services is needed
- TB services may contact them for follow-up testing or appointments (e.g. IGRA)

#### More Information?

Refer to the [BCCDC TB Manual Appendix A: TST Procedure](#)

#### Multilingual TB client handouts:

[bccdc.ca/tbresources](http://bccdc.ca/tbresources)

**References:** BCCDC TB Manual, Canadian TB Standards, CDC Mantoux TST Facilitator Guide and CDC Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test Wall Chart. Adapted and reproduced with permission of Public Health, Region of Peel.