Factsheet:

**Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)**

**Key points**
- The Tuberculin Skin Test (TST), also known as a Mantoux test, is used to assess whether a person has been infected with the tuberculosis (TB) bacteria.
- The TST is primarily used to diagnose TB infection. This is when the TB bacteria is in the body but the person is not experiencing any symptoms suggestive of TB disease.

**What does the Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) measure?**
The TST (or Mantoux test) indicates whether a person has been infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (the bacteria causing TB) by measuring if the body’s immune response to TB has been stimulated. A TST may be used to diagnose latent TB infection. It is not used to test for TB disease.

**How is it performed?**
A TST involves a small injection of tuberculin (or purified protein derivative – PPD) into the skin, usually on the forearm. After 48-72 hours the injection site is assessed for any reaction (lump). If a lump develops it will disappear within days without any treatment.

**What is latent TB infection?**
Latent TB infection is when a person has the TB bacteria in their body but the immune system is stopping the infection from causing disease. Latent TB infection causes no symptoms and cannot be passed on to other people.

There is a small risk that latent TB infection can progress to TB disease. The risk is increased in young children and old people, as well as people with weak immune systems. TB disease develops if the TB bacteria start to multiply and cause symptoms, such as a fever, unexpected weight loss, tiredness or a cough that won’t go away. Latent TB infection can be treated with special antibiotics to prevent it from progressing to TB disease in the future.

**Other tests for latent TB infection**
The interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) is another test for latent TB infection. It is a blood test and also measures the body’s immune response to TB bacteria.

Your nurse or doctor will explain the advantages and disadvantages of the different tests and advise which is more suitable for your situation. In some situations both TST and IGRA testing may be required.

**Before you have a TST**
It is important to let the nurse or doctor know if you:
- Have any immune-suppressing illness such as HIV, lymphoma, or kidney disease
- Take medication that affects your immune system such as steroids (e.g. prednisone), cyclosporine or chemotherapy (cancer drugs)
• Have had a fever or infection in the past month, such as influenza, measles, or pneumonia
• Have received any vaccines in the past month
• Have had TB disease in the past, had contact with someone with TB, have received the BCG vaccine, or have travelled or lived overseas

These conditions may affect the test result.

**Care of the TST injection site**
• Do not scratch the site
• Do not cover the site with any dressing, cream or ointment
• If any blisters occur do not break them
• You may continue all normal activities including work, sports and showering.

**After you have a TST**
After the TST you must return to the clinic 48-72 hours later so that any reaction can be assessed and recorded. Some people who have a negative TST may need a second TST, while some people with a positive TST may require an IGRA (blood test). Your nurse or doctor will explain why further tests may be needed.

**Contact your local TB service for more information**

**TB Service Contact Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Hospital Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Canterbury Hospital</td>
<td>9787 0946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Sydney</td>
<td>Liverpool Hospital</td>
<td>8738 4888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Sydney</td>
<td>Hornsby Hospital</td>
<td>9477 9217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast</td>
<td>Gosford Hospital</td>
<td>4320 3388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Sydney</td>
<td>Prince of Wales Hospital</td>
<td>9382 4643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra and Shoalhaven</td>
<td>Wollongong Hospital</td>
<td>4253 4138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sydney</td>
<td>Parramatta Health Service</td>
<td>9843 3110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepean Blue Mountains</td>
<td>Nepean Hospital</td>
<td>4734 2536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter New England</td>
<td>John Hunter Hospital</td>
<td>4921 3372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern NSW &amp; Mid North Coast</td>
<td>Lismore Population Health</td>
<td>6620 2280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern &amp; Murrumbidgee</td>
<td>Albury Community Health</td>
<td>6058 1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West &amp; Western NSW</td>
<td>Broken Hill Population Health</td>
<td>(08) 8080 1510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Updated January 2017