

# Selecting a Test for Latent TB Infection (LTBI)

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- For most people with an indication for testing based on a risk assessment, interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs), such as the Quantiferon or T-Spot TB, are preferred over the tuberculin skin test (TST). A TST is acceptable when an IGRA is not available, too costly or too logistically difficult to obtain.
- IGRA is especially helpful in persons who have previously been BCG-vaccinated (most persons born outside the U.S.)
- IGRA in children: Because IGRA has increased specificity for TB infection in children vaccinated with BCG, IGRA is preferred over the tuberculin skin test for foreign-born children  $\geq 2$  years of age. IGRAs can be used in children  $< 2$  years of age, however, there is an overall lack of data in this age group, which complicates interpretation of test results. In BCG vaccinated immunocompetent children with a positive TST, it may be appropriate to confirm a positive TST with an IGRA. If IGRA is not done the TST result should be considered the definitive result.
- For foreign-born, immunocompetent, BCG-vaccinated persons with a positive TST, in most cases IGRA can be used to confirm LTBI
- Although testing persons without risk factors is discouraged, when it cannot be avoided for administrative or policy reasons (e.g. previously negative healthcare workers who have no known new TB exposure), using two tests might be appropriate: if the first test is positive, a second test can be performed using a negative on either test to determine LTBI status
- In patients with a very high risk for progression if infected (e.g. TNF- $\alpha$  inhibitor use, HIV infection, organ transplant) some experts perform a second test if the first test is negative, using a positive on either test to determine LTBI status.
- Choice of LTBI test for serial testing programs such as for occupational health should consider additional factors and may warrant discussion with local TB control programs.
- For more in-depth information on LTBI testing, see:
  - California TB Controllers Association, [Interferon Gamma Release Assay \(IGRA\) Clinical Guidelines in California: http://ctca.org/menus/cdph-ctca-joint-guidelines.html](http://ctca.org/menus/cdph-ctca-joint-guidelines.html)
  - ATS/IDSA/CDC Practice Guidelines: Diagnosis of Tuberculosis in Adults and Children at <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/guidelines/testing.htm>