



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health

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January 21, 2014

To: Local Health Department Tuberculosis Programs, Hospital Infection Control Practitioners
From: Jason Stout, MD, MHS, TB Controller/Medical Director
Re: Tuberculin Shortage

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided notification that tuberculin production has resumed at adequate levels to meet expected demand. It is expected that most providers will be able to procure tuberculin, but some providers may not be able to immediately procure quantities sufficient for all of their needs for the next few months. The North Carolina Tuberculosis (NC TB) program recommends the following procedures for resumption of tuberculin skin testing:

- 1) **Facilities should contact their suppliers to verify the availability of an adequate quantity of tuberculin for their needs**
- 2) If an adequate quantity of tuberculin is available, testing of persons for whom tuberculin skin testing was deferred and for whom it is indicated should resume. Such persons include members of the following groups:
 - a. Staff with direct inmate contact upon employment
 - b. Inmates in the custody of the Department of Corrections (both testing upon incarceration and yearly thereafter)
 - c. Staff of licensed nursing care homes upon employment
 - d. Residents upon admission to licensed nursing homes or adult care homes
 - e. Staff in adult day care centers providing care to persons with HIV/AIDS upon employment
- 3) Healthcare facilities that have verified that their suppliers can provide an adequate quantity of tuberculin should resume regular employee testing per facility and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines
- 4) Low-risk persons for whom testing is being considered for administrative purposes (e.g. teachers, child care workers, etc.) should be screened using the procedure outlined in the June 21, 2013, memo from the NC TB Control Program. In other words, the risk and symptom screens (see attached) should be administered, and tuberculin skin testing should only be performed if the individual has an affirmative response to one of the screening questions. A negative risk and symptom screen should be considered a negative tuberculosis test in such individuals, and no further testing is required. An Interferon Gamma Release Assay is preferred over a tuberculin skin test for otherwise low-risk individuals with a positive response to the risk or symptom screening questionnaires.

www.ncdhhs.gov • www.publichealth.nc.gov

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Tuberculosis Risk Questionnaire

- | | | |
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| 1) Were you born outside the USA in one of the following parts of the world: Africa, Asia, Central America, South America, or Eastern Europe? | YES | NO |
| 2) Have you traveled outside the USA and lived for more than one month in one of the following parts of the world: Africa, Asia, Central America, South America, or Eastern Europe? | YES | NO |
| 3) Do you have a compromised immune system such as from any of the following conditions: HIV/AIDS, organ or bone marrow transplantation, diabetes, immunosuppressive medicines (e.g. prednisone, Remicade), leukemia, lymphoma, cancer of the head or neck, gastrectomy or jejeunal bypass, end-stage renal disease (on dialysis), or silicosis? | YES | NO |
| 4) Have you ever done one of the following: used crack cocaine, injected illegal drugs, worked or resided in jail or prison, worked or resided at a homeless shelter, or worked as a healthcare worker in direct contact with patients? | YES | NO |
| 5) Have you ever been exposed to anyone with infectious tuberculosis? | YES | NO |
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Tuberculosis Symptom Questionnaire

Do you currently have any of the following symptoms?

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| 1) Unexplained cough lasting more than 3 weeks | YES | NO |
| 2) Unexplained fever lasting more than 3 weeks | YES | NO |
| 3) Night sweats (sweating that leaves the bedclothes and sheets wet) | YES | NO |
| 4) Shortness of breath | YES | NO |
| 5) Chest pain | YES | NO |
| 6) Unintentional weight loss | YES | NO |
| 7) Unexplained fatigue (very tired for no reason) | YES | NO |