Cambridge Health at Work

IGRA Blood Test

You are being screened by the occupational health department for Tuberculosis (TB) as you have been identified as having an increased risk of developing TB due to an exposure to infection.

TB is caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium Tuberculosis. It is a bacterial infection spread through inhaling tiny droplets from the coughs or sneezes of an infected person. TB mainly affects the lungs. However, it can affect any part of the body including the glands, bones and nervous system. The IGRA blood test looks for TB bacterium in your bloodstream. If your blood test comes back negative, that means you are not carrying TB bacteria in your bloodstream and you will not be contacted by a member of the Occupational Health team.

If your blood test comes back positive that means you do have TB bacterium in your blood stream and you will be contacted by a member of the Occupational Health team. Please do not be concerned as this does not mean you have ‘active’ TB. You have ‘latent’ TB, which means the bacteria in your blood stream are not currently harmful.

Why have I got latent TB?

There are many reasons for having latent TB.

- You may have lived or worked in a country where TB is more common.
- You may have been around others with TB or know someone who has TB.
- You may have an illness or take medication that makes you more vulnerable to TB.
- You may work in a healthcare setting.

Do I need to worry about having latent TB?

The TB bacterium in your blood is not active and cannot harm you; therefore, you are currently fit and well. However, the bacterium can become active at any time and make you ill in the future.

Can I give TB to my friends and family?

You are not currently ill or infectious to other people. You can continue as normal, both in your work and personal life, unless you show certain symptoms which are listed further down.

Do I need to be treated?

Prevention is better than cure. One in ten people will develop active TB from latent TB. It is possible to become unwell many years after breathing in TB bacteria.
What happens next?

Occupational health will call you to inform you of your positive blood results. If they are unable to speak to you, they will automatically refer you to the TB clinic (clinic 2A) so that there is no delay in your care. At the respiratory clinic, you will be assessed and seen by the specialist respiratory TB nurse and consultant. It is important that you attend the TB clinic once an appointment is sent out to you. If you do not attend, occupational health will be informed and they will contact you.

The respiratory team will review you and will be able to advise you on treatment but if at any time you should start to experience any signs or symptoms of TB, you should seek immediate medical advice.

What signs and symptoms do I need to look out for?

- persistent cough lasting for more than three weeks
- weight loss
- fever
- fatigue
- night sweats
- loss of appetite

What do I do if I think I have any of the above symptoms?

You can either contact occupational health on 01223 216767 or your local GP. If out of hours, we advise you attend A&E.

References

CHW: 4. Imms, BBV & Infection Control\TB & BCG\TB referral letter to respiratory clinic.docx

CUH: Staff immunisation and infection screening policy [333kb]

CUH: Infection control and management of patients with mycobacterium tuberculosis (TB) guideline (IC21) [174kb]

TB Alert, the UK’s national tuberculosis charity 2016.

NHS Choices:  http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tuberculosis
Privacy & Dignity

Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high-tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team:
patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.
Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history

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