



TB Skin Test (TST) Q & A

Q. What constitutes a current TST?

- A. A TST is considered current if no more than 365 have elapsed since the *administration* of the test. For a two step TST, the 365 time interval starts the day the second test is *administered*.

Q. What constitutes a 1-step TST?

- A. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the test be administered and then evaluated (read) 48-72 hours (2-3 days) later.

Q. What constitutes a 2-step TST?

- A. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the first test be administered and then evaluated (read) 48-72 hours later, no earlier and no later. A *minimum* of 7 days after the *administration* of the first test, the second test can be administered. The second test is evaluated 48-72 hours later.

NOTE: The local health district often administers the 2-step TST using an abbreviated method: The first test is administered. Exactly seven days later the first test is read and the second test is administered during the same visit. The second test is evaluated 48-72 hours later.

BOTH methods will be accepted by CSN health programs.

Q. What is the minimum interval between administration of step 1 and step 2?

- A. Seven days.

Q. What is the maximum interval between step 1 and step 2 and still have a current 2 step TST?

- A. The CDC recommends a maximum of 365 days between administration of step 1 and step 2. Individual health programs are free to set a shorter interval to suit their educational needs.

Q. If a student waits 1 day past the expiration of their 2-step TST what do they need to do?

- A. In this case, the student must have a 2 step TB skin test performed.

Q. Do vaccines interfere with the results of TST?

- A. Live vaccines (MMR, varicella) can interfere with the results of a TST, however live vaccines can be administered on the same day as a TST without interfering with the results. If a live vaccine is given a day or more before a TST, there must be a 28 day interval between the vaccine and the TST. A live vaccine can be given following the evaluation of a TST.

NOTE: In the case of a 2 step TST, a dose of MMR or varicella vaccine can be given on the same day the first TST is administered. Then 28 days must elapse between that dose of MMR or varicella vaccine and administering a second TST.

Q. Can a chest x-ray be substituted for a TST?

- A. A chest x-ray cannot be substituted for a TB skin test. A chest x-ray is only accepted as a follow-up to a positive TB skin test.

Q. Can a blood test be substituted for a TST?

- A. Currently, CSN does not accept a blood test in lieu of a TST or a chest x-ray.

Q. Who should read (evaluate) the TST?

- A. Skin tests should be read by someone who has special training or has much experience in evaluating results, either by the same person who administered the test or at least at the same facility where the test was administered. CSN will not accept a TST administered by one facility and read by another.

Q. What happens if my TST is positive?

A. A positive TST requires a follow-up evaluation to rule out active TB. This is done by having a chest-x-ray taken and evaluated for the presence of pulmonary tuberculosis. The student must present a written report from the evaluating healthcare provider indicating the chest x-ray indicating active pulmonary disease is not present.

Q. What should be done if a student had a positive TST in the past?

A. A student with a recent or historical positive TST must have a chest x-ray (no older than 2 years) as well as the resulting report from the evaluating healthcare provider indicating there is no active pulmonary disease present. This student is exempt from further TST, but is required to complete the 'Tuberculosis Symptoms Questionnaire' annually while enrolled in CSN health programs.

Q. What is required of a student who has completed the recommended treatment (6-9 months) to prevent or eliminate active tuberculosis?

A. Such a student must present documentation of completed treatment. This student is exempt from further TST or chest x-rays, but is required to complete the 'Tuberculosis Symptoms Questionnaire' annually while enrolled in CSN health programs.

Q. If a student had several one step TST while working for a previous employer, what is required?

A. If a student can show documentation of having two or more consecutive annual negative one step TST, a 1-step TST will be required prior to enrolling. If not able to show documentation, a 2 step TST is required.

Q. If a student's TST expires several months after classes begin, does the student have to have a TST prior to enrolling?

A. For example, if a student's last TST (one step or two step TST) was, 6 months ago, that student is considered current and must have another TST before the previous one expires. The student must, however stay current throughout clinical experiences.

Q. What is the "rule" regarding chest x-rays (CXR)? How long are they good for and how often are they to be obtained?

A. Chest x-rays are only acceptable if taken as a follow up to a previous or current positive TB skin test. The x-ray must be no older than 2 years and be accompanied by a statement from the evaluating healthcare professional indicating the student is free of active pulmonary disease.