



Frequently Asked Questions about TB Skin Testing and Reporting

Wake County Human Services TB Control Program
10 Sunnybrook Road, P.O. Box 14049
Raleigh, NC 27620-4048
919-250-1228 or 919-212-9508

Does my office need to report positive PPDs (skin tests) to Wake County?

No, you do not need to report a positive PPD (skin test) to Wake County, unless you need help evaluating the result of the test or if the chest x-ray is abnormal suggesting active TB.

Does my office need to report confirmed or suspected cases of active TB disease to Wake County?

Any confirmed or suspected case of active TB disease is required by law to be reported within one working day to the TB Control program by telephone at 919-250-1228 or by fax at 919-250-3961. DO NOT wait for laboratory results to confirm the diagnosis prior to reporting. A suspected case of TB is anyone who has symptoms of active TB disease (see below) OR who has an abnormal chest X-ray after a positive PPD (skin test).

In accordance with North Carolina law, all cases of active TB disease must be treated by the local health department.

All patients with active TB disease being discharged from the hospital or transferred to another healthcare facility require prior approval by Wake County's TB Control program.

What services does the Wake County TB Control program offer to patients?

The Wake County Human Services TB Control program provides:

- Consultation
- Directly observed therapy,
- Case management and
- Clinical services for patients with TB infection and/or disease

Every person with active TB disease is investigated to find out who might have been exposed, provide testing and follow-up for contacts, assess sites of potential transmission and promote patient adherence.

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When should I suspect TB?

Think tuberculosis (TB) in patients with:

- Chronic cough (≥ 3 weeks)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fever, chills or night sweats
- Coughing up blood
- Fatigue

Remember: Active TB rates are highest among:

- Foreign-born persons from areas with a high prevalence of TB
- Homeless and marginally housed persons
- Residents of long-term care facilities (including correctional facilities)

The risk of developing TB disease increases when the patient has other medical conditions such as diabetes, HIV or other medical conditions that weaken the immune system.

Whenever TB symptoms are present, TB disease should always be ruled out with a chest X-ray, sputum smears and culture, and careful clinical evaluation. Suspected cases of TB should be referred to the Wake County TB Control program. If symptoms are absent and active TB is ruled out, preventive treatment should be prioritized for these individuals.

What if a patient has a positive TB skin test and a negative chest X-ray?

Unless TB disease is suspected, providers do not need to report positive TB skin tests with negative chest X-rays.

The Wake County TB Control program is available to assist providers with preventive treatment for their patients with latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Alternatively, patients can be referred to the Wake County TB Control Program for LTBI management, provided at no charge to the patient. Please call 919-250-1228 or 919-212-9508 for more information or assistance.

Should my office place a TB skin test if my patient was vaccinated with BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guérin)?

Yes, TB skin tests can be placed even though the patient was previously vaccinated with BCG. TB skin tests may be interpreted using the current guidelines for interpretation of TB skin tests.

What should my office do if we are unsure of how to interpret a TB skin test?

Please call 919-250-1228 to schedule an appointment for your patient to visit our office to read their TB skin test.