

POSITIVE TUBERCULIN SKIN TEST- PPD

Just to clarify— your PPD which is positive (over 10 millimeters induration) indicates that your body probably has a latent tuberculosis infection. Your BCG vaccination is unlikely to be causing this reaction. BCG rarely causes a reaction beyond 5 years. If you want it, there is an expensive (about \$300) blood test that can prove that the BCG did not cause the reaction. It is very likely that the blood test will be positive and you will still need the chest X-Ray and the medication for 6 months.

The chest X-Ray is needed to be sure your lungs are free of disease right now. This infection might never make you ill, but it has the potential to make you sick with tuberculosis at any time. You will not pass this infection along to others unless you are actually feeling sick with tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis can be very dangerous in the United States we will treat latent tuberculosis infections to prevent a chance of you later spreading the disease.

You need to take for 6 months a pill every day of medication (Isoniazid along with a vitamin pyridoxine). It is a very safe drug but we don't use it if you are pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or breast feeding your child. After a month or two on the medicine we need a blood test to be sure you are taking the medicine and that it is not bothering your liver (don't drink a lot of alcohol while taking this).

After you finish taking the pills for 6 months the PPD test will still remain forever positive but you will carry a card stating that you completed 6 months of therapy and will no longer get or transmit tuberculosis. Any workplace that requires TB testing will simply verify the authenticity of that card instead of doing a skin test.

Although you can do the treatment through the health department (to save some money) or your own physician, one follow up visit to me will still be required by INS to demonstrate that the treatment was completed. At that time we will resubmit paperwork. If you do the treatment with the health department or your own family physician we require a letter on official letterhead detailing the treatment you completed.

Paperwork will be submitted today—but INS will still wait for the follow-up paperwork 6 months from now. Todd Giese, MD

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