
What can I do to prevent myself from progressing to disease caused by TB?

There is a medication, if taken regularly for nine months, which will reduce the risk of developing disease caused by TB by over 90%. In Canada, the recommended medication is Isoniazid (INH).

Are there any problems associated with taking Isoniazid (INH)?

The biggest problem with Isoniazid (INH) is the motivation to take it as most people who are infected with the TB germ do not have any symptoms. INH also may have some side effects including fatigue, nausea, and skin rashes. The main concern with taking INH is that there is a small risk of the liver becoming inflamed. It is for this reason that you need to have regular blood work to make sure your liver is not inflamed. You should stop taking the medications if you have side effects like nausea or vomiting and see your health care provider for a check up. For most people, they resolve quickly once INH is stopped.

Will Isoniazid (INH) always be effective?

If you become infected with an organism that is resistant to INH, the medication will not be effective. Fortunately, this does not occur very often in Canada. If you have been in contact with a person with TB who is known to be resistant to INH, tell your health care provider and other drugs can be substituted.

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What Does a Positive Tuberculosis Blood Test Mean?

Information on a
Positive Tuberculosis
Blood Test



BC Centre for Disease Control
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What Does A Positive Tuberculosis Blood Test Mean?

What is the TB blood test (IGRA)?

The TB blood test is a specialized test that was developed in recent years. This test helps to identify people infected with TB. This test is not used for people who are sick with TB disease. It is used to determine if you may have been infected with TB in the past which is known as “latent” or “sleeping TB”.

What does a positive tuberculosis blood test mean?

A positive TB blood test tells us that at some stage you became infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the germ that causes TB. It is possible that you have been exposed to a person with disease caused by TB.

Is the TB blood test more accurate than the TB skin test?

Yes, the TB blood test is more accurate at identifying those people who have become infected with the TB germ.

Will the blood test tell me if I have TB disease?

The test is not used to diagnose TB disease. A positive test does not mean you have tuberculosis.

If the TB infection is latent (sleeping), what is my risk of developing active TB disease?

Ninety percent of people infected with the TB germ do not go on to develop disease caused by the TB germ. The other 10% develop TB disease and most do so in the first two years after becoming infected. There is no way of knowing who will go on to develop the disease and who will not.

Are there any situations where there is an increased risk of developing disease caused by TB if you have become infected?

There are a number of medical conditions that increase your risk of developing disease caused by TB. The single most important risk is being infected with both human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and TB. If infected with both of these organisms, you have close to a 10% per year risk of developing disease. There are also a number of other medical conditions such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease, cancer, and long term immunosuppressant therapy that tend to interfere with the body’s ability to fight off the TB germ.

Can I be infected with the TB germ and have a negative blood test?

Some people whose immunity is suppressed, such as by HIV infection, can have a falsely negative blood test. The TB doctor will discuss the results with you.