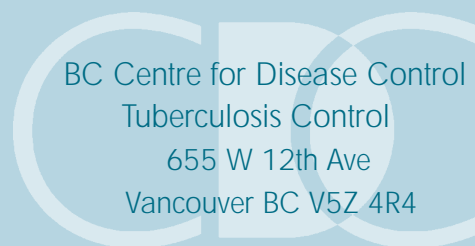

Are there any problems associated with Isoniazid (INH)?

The biggest problem with Isoniazid (INH) is the motivation to take it, because those who are infected with TB usually have no symptoms. Isoniazid (INH) also has some side effects and, like all antibiotics, can cause skin rashes and nausea. The main concern with taking Isoniazid (INH) is that there is a small risk of the liver becoming inflamed. The risk of liver inflammation is very small for those under 35 years of age. The risk is approximately 1% for those 35 to 45 years old, 1.5% to 2% for those 45 to 55 years old, and slightly over 2% for those 55 years old and over. It is for this reason that, if you start the medication, you need to have regular bloodwork to make sure that your liver is not inflamed. You should stop Isoniazid (INH) if you develop nausea or feel unwell and see your doctor so these blood tests can be done earlier. For most people, these side effects are not a problem and even if they occur, they rapidly correct themselves once Isoniazid (INH) is stopped.

Will Isoniazid (INH) always be effective?

If you become infected with an organism that is resistant to Isoniazid (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 Isoniazid (INH), other drugs can be substituted.



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What Does a Positive Tuberculosis Skin Test Mean?

Information on a
Positive Tuberculosis
Skin Test



BC Centre for Disease Control

What Does A Positive Tuberculosis Skin Test Mean?

What does a positive skin test mean?

A positive tuberculosis (TB) skin test tells us that at some stage you have become infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the germ that causes TB. It is possible that you may know someone who had TB. It is also possible that you have been exposed to a person with disease caused by TB, but did not realize it.

If I have a positive skin test, does this mean that I have a disease from TB or that I can pass the tuberculosis to others?

Being infected with the TB bacteria does not mean that you have disease caused by TB or that you can pass the TB infection to others.

What would make me or my doctor think that I have disease caused by TB?

If you have symptoms of cough, general fatigue and fevers, it is more likely that you have disease caused by TB, and your doctor will usually order a chest x-ray and examine your sputum for the TB germ.

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

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

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 caused by TB. There are a number of other medical conditions, such as diabetes, chronic renal failure, cancer, cancer therapies and prolonged corticosteroid use, that tend to interfere with the ability to fight the TB germ.

Are there any reasons why I might have a positive skin test and still not be infected?

Some people who have received an immunization called Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) vaccine to prevent TB disease can have a positive skin test from the vaccine, but the size of the skin test is small. Most people who have the immunization in early childhood are unlikely to have a positive skin test related to the vaccine in later years.

Can I be infected with TB and have a negative skin test?

Some people, whose immunity is suppressed, such as by HIV infection, can have a falsely negative skin test and still be infected.

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

There is a medication, if taken regularly for nine (9) months will reduce the risk of developing disease caused by TB by over 90%. In Canada, the recommended medication is Isoniazid, or INH for short.