

Texas Department of State Health Services
Peripheral Neuropathy Assessment Process

Neuropathy is the loss of sensation caused by damage to the peripheral nerves. It can cause pain (often “stabbing” or “burning”) or numbness/tingling in the extremities. It may occur in patients taking TB medications (high doses of isoniazid, linezolid) and if untreated, can be irreversible. Patients taking these medications should be assessed at baseline and monthly to identify any early signs of neuropathy.

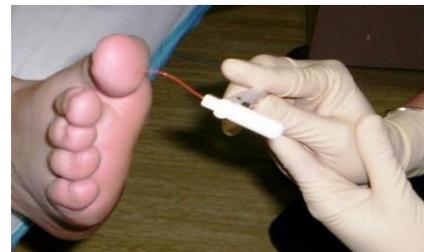
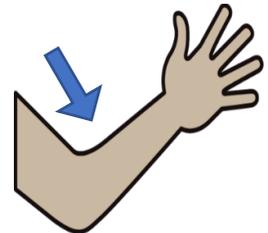
These instructions accompany the TB 702 “Toxicity Assessments for Clients on Second-Line TB Medications” and are specific to the *Peripheral Neuropathy Assessment* section found at dshs.texas.gov/idcu/disease/tb/forms/.

Supplies needed:

- 4.31/ 2gm monofilament for the hand test.
- 5.07/10gm monofilament for the foot test.

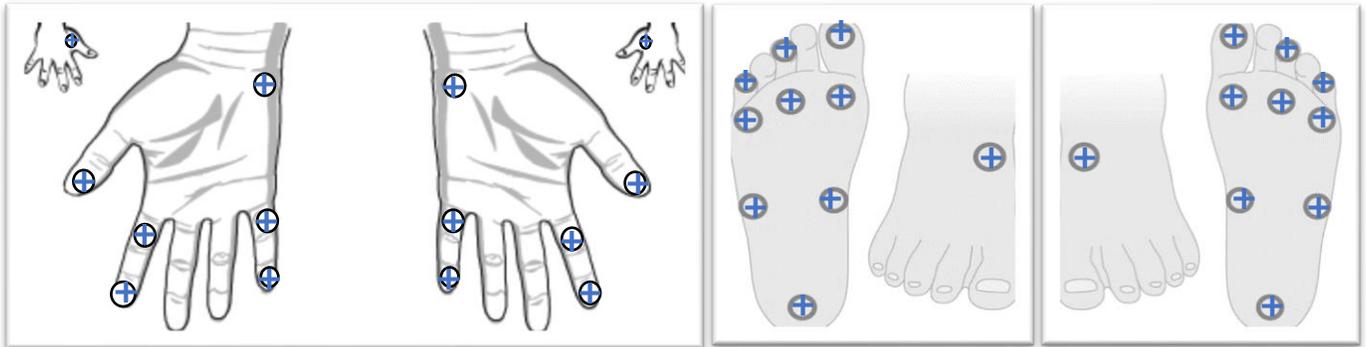
Process:

1. Begin the assessment by asking questions 1-5 on the *Peripheral Neuropathy Assessment* portion of the TB 702.
2. Next, explain to the client what you are about to do for the next portion of the assessment. You will be using monofilaments to test sensation of select areas on the hands and the feet.
3. Find a comfortable place for the patient to sit or lay and ask the patient to remove his/her shoes and socks.
4. Using standard precautions, demonstrate on another part of the body where there is not likely to be sensory loss what you are about to perform and ensure the client is able to describe the sensation they perceive. Inside the forearm is a good place.
5. Ask the patient to close their eyes and say “yes” every time they feel you touch their hands or feet.
6. Place the monofilament to the skin surface and slowly push the monofilament until it has bent approximately 1cm. Hold against the skin for approximately 2 seconds, making sure the monofilament does not slide over the skin. Avoid touching on ulcers, callus, or scars.
7. If the patient says “yes” place a positive sign (+) on the diagram in the area tested. If the patient does not respond or reports a diminished or change in sensation from last assessment, repeat the test at the same site twice more to verify their sensation. Record a negative sign (-) if the same response is reported.



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8. Repeat this procedure for all testing sites (shown in circles) to both hands and feet (examples of documentation results for a normal assessment is in Blue):



Points to Remember

- Doing both the screening questions and the monofilament exam together is important for quick intervention when abnormalities are reported.
- If any abnormalities are found compared to the previous exam, notify the physician immediately.

Caring for Monofilaments

Monofilaments may be re-used if they are cared for and stored correctly. Cleaning with an alcohol swab and storing in a dry, clean environment is recommended; check with individual manufacturer for cleaning instructions. Never re-use monofilaments that touched wounds, ulcers, or body fluids that soil the filaments. For re-use, the monofilament must remain straight and unbent.

Ordering Monofilaments

A limited supply may be available in ITEAMS if programs are unable to order locally. Contact the TB and Hansen’s Disease Branch for details.

Sample Monofilament:

