

Glossary of Terms

Active TB disease (case): an illness in which TB bacteria are multiplying and attacking a part of the body, usually the lungs. The symptoms of active TB disease include weakness, weight loss, fever, no appetite, chills, and sweating at night. If active TB is in the lungs (pulmonary TB), the symptoms may include a bad cough, pain in the chest, and coughing up blood. A person with active TB disease may be infectious and spread TB bacteria to others.

Chest x-ray: a picture of the inside of your chest. A chest x-ray is made by exposing a film to x-rays that pass through the chest. A doctor can look at this film to see whether TB bacteria have damaged the lungs.

Contact: refers to someone who has been exposed to M.tuberculosis infection by sharing air space with a person with infectious TB.

Conversion: a change in the result of a test for M.tuberculosis infection that is interpreted to indicate a change from being uninfected to infected. With the tuberculin skin test, an increase of ≥ 10 mm induration size during ≤ 2 years is defined as a conversion. A conversion is presumptive evidence of new M.tuberculosis infection and poses an increased risk for progression to TB disease.

Isoniazid (INH): a medicine used to prevent active TB disease in people who have latent TB infection. INH is also one of the four medicines often used to treat active TB disease. It is considered a first-line drug.

Latent TB infection (LTBI): a condition in which TB bacteria are alive but inactive in the body. People with latent TB infection have no symptoms, don't feel sick, can't spread TB bacteria to others, and usually have a positive TB test. But they may develop active TB disease if they do not receive treatment for latent TB infection.

Negative: usually refers to a test result. If you have a negative TB skin test reaction, you probably do not have TB infection.

Positive: usually refers to a test result. If you have a positive TB skin test reaction, you probably have TB infection.

Pulmonary TB: active TB disease that occurs in the lungs, usually producing a cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer. Most active TB disease is pulmonary.

TB Suspect: a tentative diagnosis of TB that will be confirmed or excluded by subsequent testing. Cases should not remain in this category for > 3 months.

Symptomatic: a term applied to a patient with health-related complaints (i.e., symptoms) that might indicate the presence of disease.

TB skin test: a test that is often used to detect latent TB infection. A liquid called tuberculin is injected under the skin on the lower part of the arm. If you have a positive reaction to this test, you probably have latent TB infection.

TB Blood test: a new test that uses a blood sample to find out if you are infected with TB bacteria. The test measures the response to TB proteins when they are mixed with a small amount of blood. Examples of these special TB blood tests include QuantiFERON®-TB Gold (QFT-G), QuantiFERON®-TB Gold In-Tube test (QFT-GIT), and T-Spot® TB test.

Tuberculin (PPD): a liquid that is injected under the skin on the lower part of your arm during a TB skin test.

Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov>