

ID Corner

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Should an interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA) or a tuberculin skin test (TST) be performed in individuals in whom it has been decided that testing for latent tuberculosis is warranted?

IGRA is preferred over TST if there is likelihood of infection and low to intermediate risk of disease progression. However, if the risk of disease progression is high, there is no preference of one test over the other. It is important to understand the concepts of risk of infection and risk of disease progression once infected.

The following groups have increased risk of infection:

- Household contact or recent exposure of an active case
- Mycobacteriology laboratory personnel
- Immigrants from high burden countries (>20/100,000)
- Residents and employees of high risk congregate settings

Risk of developing active tuberculosis if infected (disease progression):

- Low: no risk factors
- Intermediate: diabetes, chronic renal failure, intravenous drug use
- High: children age less than 5, human immunodeficiency virus infection, immunosuppressive therapy, abnormal chest X-ray consistent with prior tuberculosis, silicosis

Further reading:

Official American Thoracic Society/Infectious Diseases Society of America/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Clinical Practice Guidelines: Diagnosis of Tuberculosis in Adults and Children. Clin Infect Dis. (2017). 64 (2): 111-115. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciw694>