



Prenatal Care

PPD: A Test for Tuberculosis

It is safe for pregnant women

CHARLES B. WANG COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
王嘉廉社區醫療中心

The PPD Test: A Test for Tuberculosis

It is safe for pregnant women

The PPD test is a quick and simple skin test. It checks to see if you are infected with germs that cause tuberculosis (also known as TB).

TB is a serious lung disease. It is caused by germs that can hurt your lungs and other organs. These germs are spread through the air in tiny drops when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You can get infected by breathing in the germs. That's why it is important to get tested.

It is safe for pregnant women to take the PPD test throughout the pregnancy. Get the test as early as possible so you can protect your baby. If you are infected with TB germs, you can be treated before you or your baby gets sick.

What Happens During a PPD Test?

The PPD test can be done at a doctor's office or health clinic. It takes just a few minutes.

The PPD Test:

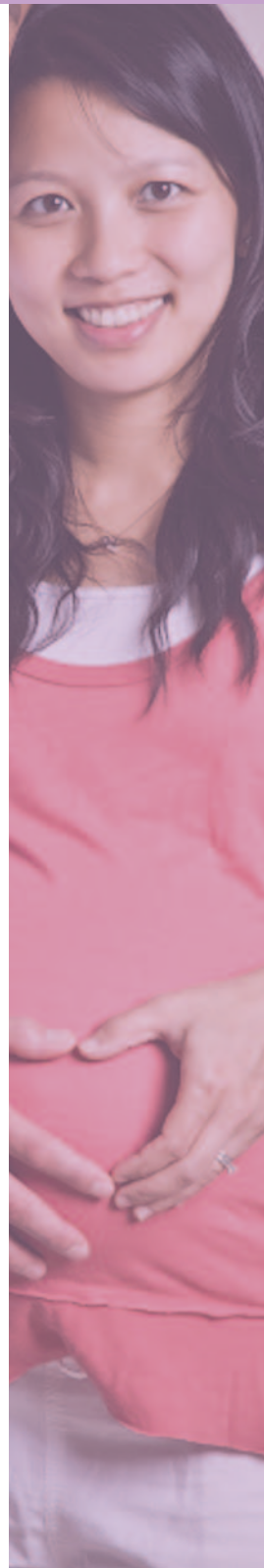
With a needle, a small amount of tuberculin liquid is put into the skin of your forearm.

Get Test Results in 2-3 Days.

You will need to return to your doctor's office to get the test spot checked 48 to 72 hours after the test. If the test spot is not checked within 72 hours, you will need to do the PPD test again.

How to Care for the Test Spot:

- » Do not cover with a bandage.
- » Do not rub dry after washing; gently pat it dry instead.
- » If it is itchy, do not scratch it or put any ointments on it. Instead put a cold, damp washcloth on top.
- » Some swelling around the test spot may occur. It will go away within 2 weeks.



What the PPD Test Results Mean



Negative Result (Normal)

If the test spot is not swollen, it means you do not have TB germs. Ask your doctor if you should still get tested once a year.

You will need to take the test again if you recently came in close contact with someone who has TB. The first test may not have detected the TB germs yet. You should get a second PPD test 1 to 3 months later.



Positive Result (Not Normal)

If the test spot is swollen, the size of the swelling is measured to decide if the result is positive.

A positive result means you have TB germs in your body. This does not mean the TB germs are active, or hurting your lungs. A chest x-ray can tell you for sure.

Make Sure You and Your Baby are Healthy If + for PPD, get a chest x-ray

With the right protection, x-rays are safe during pregnancy and won't cause problems in the baby. If your doctor finds you need a chest x-ray, it's okay to get it. Again, TB is a very serious disease and can be harmful to you and your baby.

Remember to tell the person who does the x-ray that you are pregnant. They will take actions to protect you and your baby during the x-ray.

What the Chest X-Ray Results Mean

If your chest x-ray result is normal, it means you were exposed to TB germs in the past but the germs are not hurting your lungs. This is called latent TB infection (inactive TB infection). Most people do not feel sick. You may need to take medicine to control the germs from becoming active and from causing lung disease in the future.

If your chest x-ray is not normal, the TB germs may be hurting your lungs. This is called active TB disease. Your doctor will refer you to a hospital or chest center for more testing and treatment. Taking medicine is very important to kill the TB germs. Otherwise, you can spread the germs to people you have close contact with.

Take the TB medicine if your doctor asks you to. Taking TB drugs while you are pregnant will not harm your baby. It is even safe to breastfeed your baby while taking the drugs.

Even if your PPD test result or the chest x-ray result are normal, if you have symptoms of TB, you need to follow up with your doctor for more testing.

Symptoms of TB may include:

- » a cough that lasts for more than 3 weeks
- » no appetite
- » feeling tired
- » fevers
- » night sweats

What You Need to Remember if You Have a Positive PPD Test Result:

- » Your PPD results will always remain positive even after you take TB medications. So you may not need to take the PPD test again.
- » Save records of all your PPD test and chest X-ray results. They may be requested by a doctor, school or employer in the future.
- » Get regular check ups with your doctor so you can make sure that you are healthy. You may need to get a chest x-ray every few years to check if the TB germs are affecting your lungs.

The PPD test, chest x-ray and TB medicine are all safe for pregnant women. To protect yourself and your baby, don't delay any tests or treatment.





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