

How do we check for TB?

Information for the community about how health workers test for TB

If you have symptoms of Tuberculosis (TB) – like an ongoing or bloody cough, a fever, night sweats, lumps in your neck, or you're losing weight – you should see a health worker and get a test for TB.

Types of tests

There are many ways we can test for TB. The main tests include:

- > A skin test
- > A blood test
- > A sputum (phlegm) test
- > A chest x-ray



Your health worker might refer you to a specialist to do more than one type of test.

Sometimes, a skin or blood test can show you have been exposed to TB, but it doesn't mean the germ is in your body. This is why more tests might be needed.



Checking for 'latent' or 'sleeping' TB

We often use a skin test and/or a blood test to check for 'latent' or 'sleeping' TB. This is when you have TB in your body but it is not making you sick, and you do not even know the germ is there.

If there are people with TB in your area, a health worker may ask you or your family to do a skin test or blood test, just to be safe.

Sleeping TB can be treated so you do not get sick later.

What if my test says I have TB?

If your test says you have TB, there is no need to worry – it can be treated so you recover.

If someone you live with has a test that says they have TB, do not be afraid of them – the germ moves slowly, but it is still a good idea to visit your local clinic so you can get checked too.

For more information:

Royal Adelaide Hospital, SA TB Services
Telephone: (08) 7074 1089 (business hours)
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

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