



HEALTH ALERT

September 9, 2013

The San Francisco Dept. of Public Health (SFDPH) provides this guidance based on current information. Recommendations may change, and SF recommendations may differ from those issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). For updates, visit www.sftbc.org

Nationwide Shortage of Tubersol

SITUATION:

There is currently a nationwide shortage of Tubersol purified protein derivative solution, which is used for the Tuberculin Skin Test. According to the manufacturer, the cause of the shortage is related to a quality control issue with the current batch of Tubersol. Supplies are projected to be limited through at least mid-October. Health care facilities getting regular shipments of Tubersol may be able to obtain a small monthly allocation of Tubersol if the shortage persists. Aplisol, the alternate PPD solution, is only available to existing customers. This shortage is widespread in San Francisco, and includes the San Francisco TB Clinic at Ward 94. If you are referring a patient to an alternate site for testing, please call ahead to confirm the test is still available at that site.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF CLINICIANS:

Work with your pharmacy partners to quantify and closely track your Tubersol inventory and forecast short and long term needs.

- Do not test those who are not at risk for TB. Priority indications include testing persons recently exposed to an active TB case, HIV infected individuals, and others with risk factors for exposure and progression to active TB disease.
- Use the interferon gamma release assay (IGRA), e.g. Quantiferon or T-spot blood test for all screening. IGRAs are now widely available through commercial laboratories.
 - San Francisco TB Control Unit will accept results from IGRA testing in children of all ages
- Prioritize TSTs for patients that have an immediate need for testing AND cannot easily be screened with an IGRA
 - Children < 5 years old

TB Screening for School Entry

For school entry, TB screening in San Francisco starts with a risk assessment questionnaire. If a child has no risk factors, then TB screening is complete. We ask that all clinicians only test children with a positive risk assessment. For children who have a risk factor for TB infection, the San Francisco TB Control Unit will accept results of IGRA testing for all children and infants. IGRAs, e.g. (Quantiferon Gold In-Tube or T-spot) are available through many commercial laboratories and clinicians may order the test through these sites.

Practically speaking, obtaining IGRAs in children may be limited by

- insurance coverage of the test in children < 5 years old
- phlebotomy in young children
- higher rate of indeterminate test in children < 2 years old

Please direct parents of children **who have a TB risk factor and are required to have TB screening for school entry** to call for availability of both TST/IGRA testing at [415 206 8524](tel:4152068524) if:

- They do not have a medical home or are uninsured.
- They are under 5 years old and do not have access to an IGRA test through a commercial laboratory.

TB screening for Occupational Requirements

For occupational health/infection control programs conducting mandatory screening for licensed health care facilities, the alternative is the IGRA TB blood test. Effective May 30, 2013 any TB test that is licensed and CDC recommended meets the screening requirement. IGRA blood tests no longer require a grant of program flexibility from CDPH Licensing and Certification.

TB screening for employment for those without a medical home are available at the Adult Immunization Travel Clinic, which has some limited supply of Tubersol and also offers IGRA testing.

Action Requested:

If you are experiencing a shortage in PPD solution, please download the Tubersol Shortage form and fax to the San Francisco TB Unit at [415 206 4565](tel:4152064565). This will help us understand the degree to which you are affected by the shortage so that we may report our situation to our state and federal partners.

Situation updates will be posted periodically. Additional questions may be directed to the San Francisco TB Control Section Program main line at (415) 206-8524.

REFERENCES: MMWR 2010;59(RR-5) Updated Guidelines for using interferon gamma release assays to detect Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection – United States, 2010.