

# Diagnosis of Latent TB Infection (LTBI)<sup>1</sup>

(from San Mateo County Tuberculosis Control Update 2001)

## Key Points to Remember:

1. Intention to test = intention to treat if TST is positive (Skin testing low risk populations will result in unnecessary testing and treatment because of false-positive results)
2. Previous vaccination with BCG is not a contraindication for TST (Most persons who have received prior BCG vaccination are from high prevalence countries)
3. Chest x-ray and symptom review should ALWAYS be obtained prior to treatment for LTBI (Treatment should be begun only if the radiograph is normal<sup>2</sup> and the patient asymptomatic)
4. State and local Public Health Departments do not use the 15mm cutoff (California is a high TB incidence state with a low prevalence of nontuberculous mycobacterial infections)
5. Absence of a reaction to TST does not exclude the diagnosis of TB infection or disease.

## Definition of a positive tuberculin skin test (TST)

### I. 0 mm induration

In some cases, close contacts and high-risk contacts to an active case of pulmonary or laryngeal TB should be started on prophylactic medication even if their initial TST is "negative". Check with Public Health for details.

### II. $\geq 5$ mm induration

- Recent contacts to an active case of pulmonary or laryngeal TB
- Persons known or suspected to have HIV infection
- Other immunosuppressed individuals
- Persons with an abnormal chest radiograph consistent with current or previous TB disease<sup>2</sup>
- The California Department of Corrections considers all inmates high risk, and therefore uses 5mm for all inmates.

### III. $\geq 10$ mm induration

All persons except those in I and II above.

<sup>1</sup> LTBI includes Class 2 (positive TST, negative CXR and no symptoms) and Class 4 (positive TST, abnormal but stable CXR consistent with old TB, negative bacteriologic studies, no symptoms)

<sup>2</sup> "Abnormal" refers to radiographs with parenchymal abnormalities consistent with TB. It does not refer to isolated calcified granulomas or apical pleural thickening.