

Fact sheet

Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) for Tuberculosis

What is the Interferon Gamma Release Assay?

The interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) is a blood test used to help diagnose Tuberculosis (TB) infection. TB infection means that you have been exposed to the bacteria. It does not mean that you have tuberculosis.

The IGRA is also known as QuantiFERON-TB Gold Plus (QFT-Plus).

How does IGRA work?

Blood samples are mixed with tuberculosis proteins. These proteins are not in the BCG vaccine. If a person has been in contact with TB bacteria, their white blood cells will react and produce interferon gamma that can be measured.

How is the test done?

A blood sample is taken. The sample is tested at the SA Pathology laboratory in Adelaide. Test results usually take one week to be reported.

Before you have an IGRA:

Let the nurse or doctor know if any of the following apply to you:

- > you have an immune-suppressing illness or are on any immune-suppressing medication
- > you have had a fever or infection in the past month
- > you have received any of the following vaccinations in the past month: measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), yellow fever, chicken pox (varicella), shingles

How is the test result interpreted?

A positive IGRA result suggests that you may have been exposed to TB. This does not mean that you are infectious. An appointment will be made for you to see a Chest Clinic doctor.

If your test result is negative it is unlikely that you have been exposed to TB. You will have the option to receive a report by email or post.

The information contained within this publication is for general information only. Readers should always seek independent, professional advice where appropriate. The Royal Adelaide Hospital will not accept any liability for any loss or damage arising from reliance upon any information in this publication.

For more information

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Monday-Friday, 8:45am-4:45pm

