

2018 AAP Red Book Includes Updated Recommendations for Use of IGRA Blood Tests in Children

The Red Book is published once every three years by the AAP and provides up-to-date guidance about the etiology, epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment of more than 200 childhood infectious diseases. The 31st edition of the Red Book was published in June 2018.

Since their approval and introduction in the U.S., IGRA blood tests have been recommended for testing children 5 years of age and older due to the lack of data in children younger than 5. In practice, many pediatric infectious disease specialists have used IGRAS in children younger than 5 years, and especially in those children previously vaccinated with the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine. Unlike with the tuberculin skin test (TST), prior vaccination with BCG does not cause a false positive IGRA test result.

In the Tuberculosis chapter of the 2018 Red Book, the AAP outlined its updated recommendations for testing children for *M. tuberculosis* infectionⁱ as follows:

- For children 2 years of age or older, either a TST or an IGRA blood test can be used. An IGRA is preferred for children who:
 - Have had the BCG vaccine (to avoid a false-positive TST result caused by a previous BCG vaccination); or
 - Are unlikely to return for a TST to be read.
- For children younger than 2 years of age the TST is the preferred test to detect TB infection.
- A chest X-ray (CXR) should be done to rule out active TB regardless of the TST/IGRA result.
- A negative TST or IGRA TB test does not rule out a diagnosis of TB.

Evaluating children for TB infection or disease is a complex process, and a correct diagnosis is particularly important since children younger than 2 years of age are at an increased risk of progressing to active TB and developing life-threatening forms of the disease. Physicians evaluating a young child for TB are strongly encouraged to contact the PA TB Program at 717-787-6267 to arrange a consultation with Dr. George McSherry, the State Pediatric TB Consultant.

ⁱ American Academy of Pediatrics. Tuberculosis. In: Kimberlin DW, Brady MT, Jackson MA, Long SS, eds. *Red Book: 2018 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 31st ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2018: pp. 829 - 53