

Update to Recommendations Regarding Immune-Based Testing for Tuberculosis and Co-administration of the COVID-19 Vaccine

DATE:	9/7/2021
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Alison V. Beam, JD, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Update to Recommendations regarding Immune-Based Testing for Tuberculosis and Co-Administration of the COVID-19 vaccine
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	n/a
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

This transmission is a “Health Advisory,” and provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

SUMMARY

- [Guidance](#) released on August 31, 2021 from the CDC recommends that both the interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs) and the tuberculin skin test (TST) for tuberculosis (TB) can occur without regards to timing of COVID-19 vaccination. This guidance is an update to [PA HAN 545](#).
- The prior recommendation of waiting 4 weeks from the final COVID-19 vaccination for immune-based TB testing is no longer recommended.
- Patients with active TB disease or being evaluated for possible active TB disease may receive COVID-19 vaccination.
- If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Background

When the COVID-19 vaccinations first received their initial emergency use authorization the recommendation regarding the COVID-19 vaccination and testing for tuberculosis (TB) stated that TB testing with either the interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs) or tuberculin skin test (TST) should occur either prior to administration of the COVID-19 vaccine or wait until 4 weeks after the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. This was out of concern that the immune response

generated by the COVID-19 vaccination would interfere with the result from the immune-based testing for tuberculosis. There were many logistical concerns with this recommendation especially in regard to the dual task of COVID-19 vaccination and the screening of health care workers and patients for TB.

On August 31, 2021 the CDC updated their [special considerations for COVID-19 vaccination](#) and announced that the COVID-19 vaccine and both the IGRA and TST tests for tuberculosis can be co-administered. There does not need to be a 4 week separation between them. This recommendation should streamline the health screening process and COVID-19 vaccinations for Healthcare workers and patients.

Recommendations

- 1- Clinicians and providers may co-administer COVID-19 vaccine and immune-based testing for TB. This is an update to [PA HAN 545](#).
- 2- There does not need to be a 4 week separation between COVID-19 vaccination and immune-based testing for TB.
- 3- Patients with active TB disease or being evaluated for possible active TB disease can receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of September 7, 2021 but may be modified in the future.
--