



## Durham Region Health Department Facts about...



# Interferon-Gamma Release Assay (IGRA)

## What is it?

An Interferon-Gamma Release Assay (IGRA), such as QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Plus (QFT-Plus), is a blood test that will tell you if you have been infected with tuberculosis (TB) germs. The body's response to TB germs can usually be detected by an IGRA about 6 to 8 weeks after exposure.

- An IGRA is not a vaccine
- An IGRA requires only one visit with a healthcare provider
- Unlike the Tuberculin Skin Test (TST), an IGRA does not require a second visit to have the test “read”, and the result is not affected by prior BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guérin) vaccination
- IGRA is not currently publicly funded (or free)
- The IGRA will **NOT** give you TB

## What do my IGRA results mean?

**Positive IGRA:** This means you are infected with the TB germ. It does not mean you have TB disease or that you are sick.

**Negative IGRA:** This means your body did not react to the TB proteins in the test and you are likely not infected with the TB germ.

**Indeterminate IGRA:** This means the test could not be clearly interpreted as positive or negative, either due to laboratory factors or a weakened immune system. If your result is indeterminate, the test may need to be repeated, or your health care provider may recommend further assessment.

## Are there any side effects with an IGRA?

An IGRA is a blood test. Side effects are uncommon and may include:

- Minor pain, bruising or bleeding at the site where the blood was drawn
- Redness or swelling at the needle site, which usually resolves on its own
- Light-headedness in some people

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If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



# Who should NOT get an IGRA?

An IGRA is generally considered safe for most people. However, an IGRA may not be the preferred test or may need to be deferred in certain situations, such as:

- People with symptoms of active TB disease (cough, fever, weight loss, night sweats, fatigue)
- People who had a previous positive TB test or TB treatment
- Children under two years of age (a TST is usually preferred in this age group)
- People who are severely immunocompromised as the result may be indeterminate or less reliable; your health care provider may recommend additional testing
- For people who cannot have blood drawn safely, please discuss alternatives with your health care provider

## Your record of protection

Keep a record of your IGRA blood test result. A positive IGRA does not need to be repeated once confirmed, as the result will remain positive and repeat testing is not helpful.

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