



Barnmorskemottagningar

Patientinformation QuantiFERON-screening för tuberkulos (TB) översatt till engelska

2025-07-03

QuantiFERON screening test for tuberculosis (TB)

Why are you being offered a QuantiFERON test?

All pregnant women that come from countries with a higher rate of tuberculosis (TB) are offered a blood test at their antenatal clinic (Barnmorskemottagning). This test is also offered to pregnant women who have lived in refugee camps or in other environments with increased risk of TB contagion.

What is tuberculosis?

TB is an infection caused by tuberculosis bacteria. The lungs are most often affected but other parts of the body can also be infected. TB is common in many parts of the world and it is a serious illness. In Sweden, about 600-700 people contract TB each year. Most of these people were born outside Sweden.

How are people infected with tuberculosis?

TB can be caught from adults with active TB. The bacteria are spread through the air when someone coughs and another person breathes in the droplets containing the bacteria. TB is mostly contagious if people are in close and lengthy contact.

What is the difference between being infected with tuberculosis and being ill with tuberculosis?

People who are ill with TB have a large number of active bacteria in their bodies. They usually have symptoms (coughing, weight loss, fever). If the TB is not treated, the bacteria can spread from the lungs and attack other organs. Untreated TB can lead to permanent damage or death.

A person who is infected, but not ill, has what is called latent (inactive) TB. The number of bacteria is much lower and they are not active. The infected person is not ill and cannot infect other people. Later in life, however, the bacteria can be activated and the infected person can become ill. Infected people can be given medication in order to prevent them from becoming ill later; this is called prophylactic treatment. This is especially important during pregnancy, because women who have just given birth are at increased risk of transforming from latent (inactive) to the active, contagious form of TB. If this happens, they can infect their newborn babies, which can have serious consequences

Why is the QuantiFERON test used for tuberculosis screening?

The QuantiFERON test can detect both active (contagious) and latent (inactive) TB. Active TB must be treated immediately. It is also important to identify pregnant women with latent TB, since they sometimes require prophylactic medication. This prophylactic treatment is often given after delivery, decreasing the risk that the women will become ill with active TB and thus lowering the risk of the baby becoming ill.

How is the QuantiFERON test done?

A blood test is taken from a vein in your arm at your Antenatal Clinic (Barnmorskemottagningen). The test is analyzed at the laboratory and your midwife will get the results within a few days.