Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) TB Tests
Provider Information and Guidelines for Interpretation

How do you interpret IGRA test results?

Negative: Same interpretation as negative TST – no further TB evaluation unless indicated by clinical judgment.

Positive: Same interpretation as positive TST. Radiograph and medical evaluation indicated.

Indeterminate: Repeat IGRA or place TST per patient and provider preference.

Can IGRAs be done at the same time as receiving vaccinations?

Similar to TST, live virus vaccines might affect IGRA test results. However, this effect has not been studied.

The CDC recommends that IGRA testing in the context of live vaccine administration be done as follows:

- Either on the same day as vaccination with the live-virus vaccine, OR
- 4 - 6 weeks after administration of the live-virus vaccine.

How do IGRAs work?

IGRA measures a person's immune response to M. tuberculosis. White blood cells that are infected with M. tuberculosis will release interferon-gamma (IFN- J) when mixed with antigens derived from M. tuberculosis.

The antigens include ESAT-6 and CFP-10, and TB7.7(p4) proteins specific to M. tuberculosis complex. These antigens are not found in BCG strains or M. avium.

The IGRA results are based on the amount of IFN- Jthat is released. Additional tests such as chest radiograph are needed to exclude TB disease and confirm the diagnosis of LTBI.

Where can I get or order an IGRA?

IGRAs are now available through many commercial laboratories with provider prescription. You should advise patients to check with the individual draw stations of these laboratories, as they often have specific days that they draw and process the IGRA tests.

Additional Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated Guidelines for Using Interferon Gamma Release Assays to Detect Mycobacterium tuberculosis Infection, United States. MMWR 2010; 59 (No.RR-5)

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