



County of Erie

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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HEALTH ADVISORY #304

April 9, 2013

Purified Protein Derivative (PPD) Shortage for Employee Testing Programs

Please distribute to the Healthcare Providers, Infection Control Department, Emergency Department, Employee Health Service, Infectious Disease Department, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Acute and Long Term Care Facilities, and Hospice and Home Care Programs.

SUMMARY

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is temporarily relaxing tuberculosis testing requirements for employee testing programs because of the current shortage of Purified Protein Derivative (PPD) solutions. It is anticipated that the product will be available by June to allow programs to resume full testing protocols.

TESTS

Intradermal Mantoux tests:

Tubersol (Sanofi Pasteur) PPD solution is currently backordered. As tracked by the Association of Health Systems Pharmacist, <http://www.ashp.org/DrugShortages/Current/Bulletin.aspx?id=973> both the one ml (10 test) and the 5 ml (50 test) vials are currently on backorder. A recent surge in orders for the other PPD solution, Aplisol (JHP Pharmaceuticals), has led to a backorder of their 50 dose vials and diminishing supplies of the 10 dose vials.

Switching from one tuberculin testing solution to another is not generally recommended because of the potential for an increase in false positive test results when changing products.

Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) Blood tests:

The two FDA- approved IGRA blood tests, QuantiFERON-TB Gold In Tube (Qiagen and TSpot.TB (Oxford Immunotec) are accepted by NYSDOH for use in serial testing. However, IGRA blood tests have been associated with false positive results and with unexpected conversions and reversions in low-risk populations. Thus, IGRA blood tests are not necessarily optimal for serial testing in all settings, particularly if a temporary switch is planned.

NYSDOH GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEE TESTING PROGRAMS

The Department supports prioritizing available solution for individual testing needs. This includes:

- 1) Persons who are contacts to infectious tuberculosis (TB) cases
- 2) Persons being evaluated for suspected active TB
- 3) Persons at increased risk for TB due to medical conditions
- 4) Persons recently arrived from high TB incidence countries

Any of the available tuberculin skin tests or IGRA blood tests can be used in these situations, based on availability of product, population group and provider preference, in accordance with current guidance.

Hospitals, nursing homes, and other DOH-regulated health care settings which are currently experiencing low supplies of PPD may delay required annual employee testing for several months, until the shortage is resolved (currently anticipated by June). Facilities will need to develop written policies documenting any modifications and develop systems for recalling persons once testing supplies are replenished. Initial testing of new employees should be continued as supplies allow.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about TB testing or this advisory can be directed to the Erie County Department of Health TB Program at (716) 858-7731 (Monday – Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the availability of PPD, visit the Association of Health Systems Pharmacists website at: <http://www.ashp.org/DrugShortages/Current/Bulletin.aspx?id=973>

For information on TB testing, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/default.htm>

The ECDOH Health Alert & Advisory System is an e-mail notification system designed to alert community partners about important health related information. You can sign up to receive alerts & advisories at <http://www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=node/59>.

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

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; no immediate action necessary

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