## Extent and Effects of Recurrent Shortages of Purified Protein Derivative Tuberculin Skin Test Antigen Solutions – United States, 2013

Shortages of skin test solutions used to detect tuberculosis infection -- reported by U.S. public health programs over the past year -- have caused many TB programs to change testing practices. Tuberculin skin tests (TSTs) are one of two types of tests available to detect TB infection. Two TST solutions are FDA-approved: Tubersol, which has been unavailable intermittently since late 2012, and Apisol, which has seen an increase in demand as supplies of Tubersol have been limited. An August 2013 CDC survey of TB control programs across the country found that more than half (56 percent of responding programs) have experienced shortages of at least one of these test solutions, to the point where routine activities were threatened or stopped altogether. Several programs not experiencing shortages took preemptive steps, such as suspending routine testing, and some reported increasing the use of blood tests instead of skin tests to detect TB infection. All TST solutions are now available and returning to the market, and supplies are expected to return to normal by early next year. In the interim, CDC recommends that public health programs: 1). Switch to blood tests instead of TSTs to detect TB infection; 2). Prioritize the use of available TSTs; or 3). Substitute Apisol for Tubersol for skin testing, as available. In settings where TB exposure is unlikely, the deferment of routine serial testing should be considered.

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