Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

INFORMATION SHEETS

Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA)

- **What is an IGRA test?**

  The Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) is a blood test used to help determine or diagnose Tuberculosis (TB) exposure. In Occupational Health, the IGRA test can be used

  - To determine the cause of a positive Mantoux test or of otherwise unexplained symptoms,

  Or

  - As a screening tool to rule out active or latent TB infection.

NICE guidelines state that new member of staff who have moved from countries which have a high incidence of TB or who have worked in other high risk situations should be tested in this way. *

- **How the test is done**

  A blood sample is taken in the usual way but this must be transported to the immunology laboratory (Southmead Hospital) promptly which is why tests are only done at certain times on certain days.

- **How does IGRA work?**

  Blood samples are mixed with two tuberculosis proteins. These proteins are not in the BCG vaccine. If a person has been in contact with TB bacteria, their white blood cells will react and produce gamma interferon which can be measured.

- **What happens next?**

  The results will take up to a week to be reported. A positive IGRA result suggest that TB exposure is possible. If your result is positive, one of the Occupational Health nurses or doctors will contact you to discuss what happens next. Sometimes an appointment will be made for you to see a Chest Clinic doctor to discuss the results.

* NICE clinical guideline 117 Recommendation 16th (March 2011) *Offer an interferon-gamma test to new NHS employees who have recently arrived from high-incidence countries or who have had contact with patient in setting where TB is highly prevalent.*