



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Michael Hill *Health Agency Director*

Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH *Health Officer/Public Health Director*

PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

Date: January 11, 2021
Contact: Christine Gaiger, PHN, Communicable Disease Program
805-781-5577, cgaiger@co.slo.ca.us

COVID-19 mRNA Vaccination and TB Testing

The following is a summary of a January 7, 2021 Dear Colleague Letter from the CDC Division of TB Elimination addressing questions about COVID-19 mRNA vaccination and tests used for tuberculosis (TB) infection.

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccine is not a live virus vaccine, and there are no data and no immunologic reason to believe that a tuberculin skin test (TST) or interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) will impact the effectiveness of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. Yet not enough is known of the potential impact of mRNA vaccines on immune responses to say conclusively whether the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine could have a potential effect on TST or IGRA test results during the first 4 weeks after COVID-19 vaccination.

For healthcare personnel or patients who require baseline TB testing (at onboarding or entry into facilities) at the same time they are to receive a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine, CDC recommends:

- Perform [TB symptom screening](#) on all healthcare personnel or patients.
- If using IGRA, draw blood prior to COVID-19 mRNA vaccination.
- If using TST, place prior to COVID-19 mRNA vaccination.
- If COVID-19 mRNA vaccination has already occurred, defer TST or IGRA until 4 weeks after completion of 2-dose COVID-19 mRNA vaccination.

For healthcare personnel who require testing for other reasons, CDC recommends:

- Perform TB symptom screening on all healthcare personnel.
- Test for TB infection before or during the same visit as COVID-19 mRNA vaccination. If this is not possible, prioritization of testing for TB infection needs to be weighed

Public Health Department

2191 Johnson Avenue | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 | (P) 805-781-5500 | (F) 805-781-5543

www.slopublichealth.org

with the importance of receiving COVID-19 mRNA vaccination based on potential COVID-19 exposures and [TB risk factors](#).

- Healthcare personnel with high-risk conditions for TB progression should be fully evaluated as soon as possible.
- Healthcare personnel without high-risk conditions for TB progression should proceed with contact tracing (symptom screening, chest radiograph or other imaging, specimen for microbiologic evaluation) but delay being tested for TB infection (with either TST or IGRA) if prioritized for receiving COVID-19 mRNA vaccination.

All potential recipients of COVID-19 mRNA vaccination should weigh the risks and benefits of delaying TST/IGRA with their healthcare providers.

For more information, please visit Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html> and Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mRNA.html>.

See the full letter at <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/letters/covid19-mrna.html>.

This Provider Health Advisory is also available online at www.slopublichealth.org.