

TB Gamma Interferon Release Assay (Quantiferon)

General information

This test measures gamma interferon produced by T cells in response to mycobacterial peptides

Specimen transport: Samples should reach the laboratory within four hours of being drawn. Samples are not accepted at the weekend. An alternative for hospitals outside Greater Manchester is to incubate the samples locally, centrifuge them and send the supernatant. This should only be done after discussion with laboratory staff.

Repeat frequency: At significant change of clinical symptoms.

Special precautions: Four special sample tubes are required for this test. They can be obtained from the Immunology laboratory. These tubes are vacutainers and will draw 1ml of blood. Please do not take the caps off the tubes. Please do not overfill the tubes. Read and follow the accompanying instructions carefully.

Laboratory information

Normal reference range: Negative

Volume and sample type: The test requires special sample tubes obtainable from Immunology (0161 276 6440)

Method: ELISA

Turnaround time (calendar days from sample receipt to authorised result): Median – 4

Participation in EQA Scheme: UK NEQAS for Interferon Gamma Release Assays

Clinical information

Indications for the test: The test is used to help diagnose latent TB infection and is indicated in individuals with a positive delayed hypersensitivity skin test.

Factors affecting the test: The test is less reliable on patients with suspected active TB (as opposed to latent TB), infants and in immune deficiency states.

ICE reference: GIFN (Latent TB)

(Last updated May 2021)