



Public Health  
England



Home Office

## TB screening for the UK

This leaflet is your guide to TB screening for the UK. It will inform you about what you need to know about TB and TB screening requirements for the UK.

Although almost all cases of Tuberculosis (TB) can be treated and cured, delays in diagnosis and other factors mean that it is a serious infection which kills an estimated 1.8 million people each year. TB can affect any part of the body, but a risk of transmission only arises where the disease is in its active form in the lungs. Therefore, pre-entry screening for the UK only covers active TB in the lungs.

### Why do I need to be screened?

- the purpose of TB screening is to detect the presence of Lung TB and prevent the individual getting worse and passing on the infection to others
- pre-entry screening is compulsory for those who wish to stay in the UK for over six months and are travelling from a country, where TB is common
- screening is not required if you are travelling to the UK as a tourist
- you will be issued with a TB clearance certificate by your doctor if no TB is found on screening. The certificate states that you are free of Lung TB and is needed before you can apply for a visa for the UK

### What is the benefit to me of being screened before my arrival to the UK?

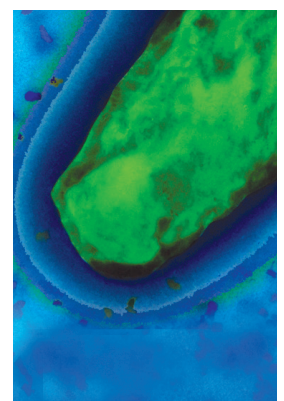
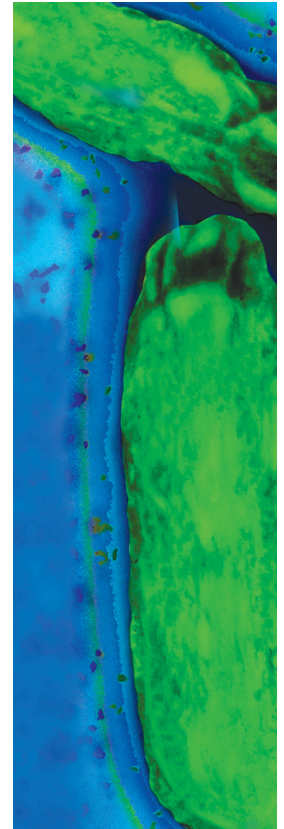
- it is better for your health to detect TB and start treatment early
- it is also better to take the test at your convenience in your country, and not having to screen on arrival. This helps to reduce your time at the UK borders, where previously you would have to undergo screening

### Where will the screening take place and who is responsible for the screening process?

- you will be screened at a designated clinic approved by the UK's Home Office. It will be carried out in your home country, on behalf of UK immigration authorities. A list of approved clinics is available from the UKBA website ([www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/appendixt](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/appendixt))

### What should I take to my appointment?

- you should take two official documents as proof of identity, and one of these must be your passport. In addition you will require two recent passport sized photos, payment for your TB testing and your medical records if appropriate
- if you have had TB in the past you should provide details of your previous diagnosis and treatment if possible



## How much will I have to pay for TB screening?

- you will pay a clinic fee, which varies from country to country. The fee covers the consultation, the X-Ray, and the certificate. It is possible that additional costs may occur if further tests (such as a sputum test) are required. The clinic fees are in addition to the cost of your visa application

## The screening process explained:

### Step 1:

- before screening can then begin, you will need to complete the Informed Consent Form in the clinic
- then the doctor will ask you about your current complaints, previous illnesses, (including TB) and whether you have had a relative or friend with TB
- your doctor may carry out a physical examination where appropriate

### Step 2: (Chest X-ray)

- thereafter you will have a chest x-ray which detects changes to the lungs which may indicate Lung TB
- for the x-ray, you will need to remove your clothes from your top half and will be given a gown to wear
- the x-ray usually takes place on the same day and your results should be ready for collection within 24 hours
- if your doctor does not suspect TB after the consultation and X-Ray, you will be issued with a TB certificate

### Step 3: (Sputum Test)

- if your x-ray is not completely normal, your doctor will ask you to provide three samples of sputum (coughed up phlegm from the lungs). This will be done in the clinic and you therefore have to attend clinic on three mornings
- the samples will then be analysed under a microscope and sometimes the TB bacteria can be seen with a special stain
- however, often the TB bacteria only grow in a culture of the sample. Therefore all samples will be cultured The final diagnosis can take up to two months

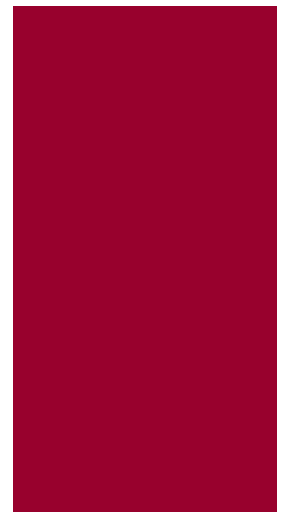
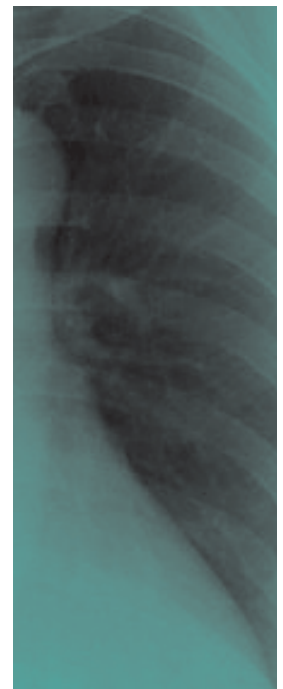
**All above steps will be explained to you clearly. If you still have any concerns regarding the screening process, please speak to your doctor or nurse at the clinic.**

## Do all VISA applicants need to be screened for TB?

- all applicants for long term visas from countries where TB is common must be screened
- specific screening guidelines apply for children under 11 and pregnant women.
- details and exemptions can be found in the UK Technical Instructions or on the Home Office website

## Can the whole family be screened together?

- if you are intending to travel to the UK with your family, the clinic should be able to organise screening of all family members at the same day



### Once I've obtained the certificate, how long is it valid for?

- a TB Certificate is valid for 6 months from the date that it is issued
- after entry to the UK, health authorities may contact you to offer a screening test for latent (inactive) TB. This is in addition to the pre-entry screening to prevent a reactivation of this form of TB

### How will testing positive for TB affect my VISA application?

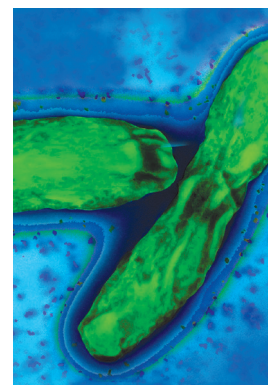
- if you test positive for TB, your doctor will refer you for antibiotic treatment immediately. You cannot be issued with the Certificate right away but may re-apply following the completion of treatment
- your doctor will report the diagnosis of Lung TB to the local, regional or national authorities as per your country's requirements. Your doctor will also have to report your diagnosis to the UK health authorities
- once you completed your treatment (usually after 6 months), you will be eligible to be re-screened at an additional fee. Prior to applying for your visa, you will require a valid screening certificate from an approved clinic, confirming that you are free from Lung TB
- if you are found to no longer have Lung TB, the certificate can then be issued and you should include it with your VISA application. **A previous TB diagnosis will have no effect on the Visa process, if subsequently certified free of TB**

### So TB can be cured?

- yes. Whilst untreated TB can be lethal, it is treatable & curable with a combination treatment of antibiotics for a minimum of 6 months. Usually, within the first two to four weeks of treatment you should start to feel better and you will no longer be infectious
- however, it is crucial you complete the whole course of antibiotics to cure the TB
- failure to do so can lead to the TB returning in a form that is resistant to the usual drugs and more difficult to treat

### Who exactly can view my data?

- all information will remain strictly confidential and will be handled under the UK Data Protection Act 1998
- your clinical data will **only** be shared between healthcare professionals and civil servants if necessary for public health and quality assurance purposes and will not be passed on to anyone else



© Crown copyright 2013

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v2.0. To view this licence, visit OGL or email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk). Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned. Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to [publications@phe.gov.uk](mailto:publications@phe.gov.uk).

Published October 2013