

When the BCG (TB) vaccine is not available

Tuberculosis (TB) is a very uncommon disease in Australia. Infants travelling to countries where TB is common may be at risk of disease and young children who get TB are most at risk of severe disease.

Young children, when travelling to countries with high rates of TB, are offered either a BCG vaccine (a vaccine used to limit TB disease) or Mantoux skin testing to assess exposure to/ infection from TB that can be treated.

Due to a worldwide shortage, BCG vaccine is currently not available in the NT.

- During this shortage period all children 6 months and over who are travelling to countries with high rates of TB will be offered a Mantoux skin test before, and 2 to 3 months after returning from travel, to detect any exposure/infection to TB while overseas.
- Healthy babies under 6 months will be assumed to be Mantoux negative and only be Mantoux tested 2 to 3 months after returning from travel.
- Mantoux tests will detect exposure to/ infection from TB while overseas and treatment can then be offered to prevent progression from infection to active TB disease.

For more information see BCG vaccine and Mantoux test fact sheets at:

http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Centre_for_Disease_Control/Publications/CDC_Factsheets/index.aspx

Catch up programs for eligible children who have missed out on a BCG vaccine at birth may be offered if/when vaccine is available depending on the Mantoux status, the age of the child and the risk of TB.

Please contact the TB Unit or Immunisation Unit in your region for further advice.

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