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**NATIONWIDE SHORTAGE OF TUBERCULIN SKIN TEST ANTIGENS:**

**Recommendations from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health**

August 15, 2019

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has been made aware of a current national shortage, and anticipated supply interruption, of APLISOL®, one of two purified-protein derivative (PPD) tuberculin products licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for detecting TB infection. The APLISOL® shortage was announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Limited availability of TUBERSOL®, the other FDA-licensed PPD tuberculin product, has also been reported.

In an attempt to help providers and public health programs that currently use APLISOL® manage this situation, CDC has issued an [advisory](http://emergency.cdc.gov/HAN/han00420.asp) that suggests several operational strategies. CDC notes that switching products or methods might make serial changes in test results difficult to interpret: the apparent conversions of results from negative to positive or reversions from positive to negative could be caused by inherent inter-product or inter-method discordance.

Consistent with the CDC guidance, DPH recommends:

1. Substitute interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) blood tests for tuberculin skin tests (TST). (Note that TST is the preferred test for children under 2 years of age.)
2. Substitute TUBERSOL® for APLISOL® for skin testing.
3. Prioritize skin testing to focus testing on persons at risk for TB infection and/or progression to disease by using a [TB Risk Assessment](https://www.mass.gov/lists/tuberculosis-information-for-health-care-providers-and-public-health#tb-risk-assessment-). For persons with TB symptoms or abnormal chest X-ray consistent with active TB disease, evaluate for active TB disease.
4. Defer routine skin testing of persons in settings with low risk for exposure until APLISOL® availability is restored.\*

\*Note: *Routine* annual testing is no longer recommended for most health care personnel. See ([Tuberculosis screening, testing, and treatment of U.S. health-care personnel](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6819a3.htm); MMWR 2019;68:439–443) for more information.

Contact the DPH TB Program at 617-983-6970 for additional assistance.