Tuberculosis is an infectious disease that most commonly affects the lungs. The Tuberculosis skin test can show if you have been exposed to the organism that causes tuberculosis. The skin test involves injecting a small amount of fluid called Tuberculin into the skin of the forearm.

The site of the skin test must be examined by a health professional within 48 – 72 hours to determine the result of the test. It will be necessary to repeat the test if you are not examined within this 72-hour period. Redness may occur at the test site, but does not indicate a positive test. Any swelling (also called an induration) that is present will be measured by a health professional who will determine if this indicates a positive or negative test.

A positive skin test does NOT mean that you have active tuberculosis but that you may have been exposed to the tuberculosis organism at some time in the past. If the result of the skin test is positive, a chest X-ray must be obtained to determine whether there is any active disease.

McKinley Health Center generally uses a TB blood test rather than the skin test. The blood test for TB does not require examination of the skin after the blood is drawn, and the results are not affected by BCV vaccination.

**Why do I need the tuberculosis screening if I have had the BCG Vaccine?**

In order to maintain a healthy environment for students, faculty and staff, the University of Illinois seeks to assure that the campus is free from tuberculosis. Because different countries have different standards of testing and evaluating for this disease, the University requires that the student health center screen all incoming international students for TB.

Many individuals who grew up in countries other than the United States or Canada have received the BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin) vaccine against tuberculosis. Studies have shown, however, that although some people are protected by this vaccine, many are either not protected at all, or immune for only a short time.

If you have a positive reaction to the TB skin test and have received BCG, the provider at your follow-up appointment will consider certain factors such as the extent of the reaction, whether you come from a country with a high incidence of TB, whether you have had contact with a person with active TB, and/or how many doses of BCG you have received. They will then advise you on what to do next.

Tuberculosis testing is performed in the Immunization and Travel Clinic during walk-in hours: Monday through Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Note: No testing is done on Thursday).

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: **http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu**