

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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**TO: Health care providers/Health Departments**  
**FROM: Lynn Sosa, MD**  
**Deputy State Epidemiologist**  
**DATE: August 19, 2013**  
**SUBJECT: Update on isoniazid and tuberculin skin test antigen shortages**

This letter is an update to health care providers and health departments on the current status of shortages of isoniazid and purified protein derivative solutions used for tuberculin skin testing (TST) (Tubersol and Aplisol).

1. Although the isoniazid supply has been re-established, there are still issues obtaining adequate amounts of the drug and the price has increased due to demand. At this time, the prioritization policy for isoniazid provided by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) Tuberculosis (TB) Control Program issued on January 22, 2013, remains in effect.
2. There continues to be issues in the supply of both TST solutions, Tubersol and Aplisol. The only manufacturer currently supplying Tubersol has severely restricted orders. The shortage of Tubersol is thus also having an effect on the availability of Aplisol.

As a result of the shortage in Tubersol, **effective immediately and until further notice**, Tubersol will only be provided by the DPH TB Control Program under the following circumstances:

- For the evaluation of persons with suspected TB disease
- For TB contact investigations
- For evaluating newly arrived refugees and Class "B" immigrants
- For persons at highest risk for progressing to TB disease, if infected (e.g. HIV-positive, children < 5 years old)

All Tubersol orders submitted to the DPH TB Control Program will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. These restrictions apply to all providers that request Tubersol from the DPH TB Control Program.

CDC has published the following recommendations for managing TB testing during the shortage:

- Substitute interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs) for TSTs where available and feasible. IGRA testing for some high risk persons is available through the DPH Public Health Laboratory but only with prior consultation with the TB Control Program.
- Consider temporary deferment of TSTs, especially for persons who are not considered high priority. In general, persons with no risk for TB or with a previous history of TB disease or latent TB infection should not be tested.
- Substitute Aplisol for Tubersol, where available. Studies have shown testing with either product to produce similar results for most patients. It is recognized that this approach is likely to become less feasible as the Aplisol supply is affected by the Tubersol shortage.

Report forms and other TB information can be found at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/tb>. Please contact the TB Control Program at (860) 509-7722 with any questions.

### **Resources**

CDC. Notes from the field: national shortage of isoniazid 300mg tablets. MMWR 2012;61:1029. Available at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6150a4.htm?s\\_cid=mm6150a4](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6150a4.htm?s_cid=mm6150a4)

CDC. National shortage of purified-protein derivative tuberculin products. MMWR 2013;62: 312.

Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6216a5.htm>