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[Note: Contact information for the Alaska Section of Epidemiology can be found at the end of this message.](#)

March 8th, 2013

Nationwide Shortage of Tubersol (PPD)

In addition to an ongoing nationwide shortage of isoniazid (see previous health alerts), there is currently a shortage of Tubersol (PPD), used for tuberculin skin testing. The State of Alaska is unable to secure more Tubersol at this time, although product availability is expected to improve as early as late March, 2013.

There is another PPD product, Aplisol, which may be used for tuberculin skin testing (TST). Due to an increased demand for Aplisol nationwide, supply of this product is becoming erratic.

Additionally, there are concerns that switching to Aplisol may result in an increased number of positive tests when compared to testing with Tubersol. This is usually due to misreading of the test results. Please review interpretation of TSTs if necessary, and ensure you are measuring only induration (not redness or soft tissue swelling) transversely (across the arm).

Until these shortages are resolved, the State of Alaska will be unable to supply Tubersol or Aplisol for routine PPD testing. Contact the Section of Epidemiology (907-269-8000) or the Depot (907-341-2209) for guidance, or to discuss specific needs at this time.

Recommendations for TB testing during the Shortage
<p>-Prioritize TSTs – Test high risk groups only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contacts to an active TB case• Persons with symptoms suggestive of TB disease• Immunocompromised persons• HIV positive persons• Recent immigrants from high TB burden countries <p>-Defer annual screening of employees</p> <p>-Notify SOE if you have Tubersol or Aplisol stock which you are not able to use. SOE is attempting to build and maintain a stock of PPD testing products to be used for high priority situations.</p>