

International Adoptions Recommend Testing

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that each adopted child arriving in the United States be tested for a number of diseases, including:

- **Hepatitis B:** All children should have blood tests for hepatitis B. These tests can tell you whether your child has the infection currently or had it at some point in the past. It can also tell if he has had the hepatitis B vaccination. If you're adopting a child from another country, you and all your family members should be immunized against hepatitis B before your child arrives.
- **Hepatitis C:** Although routine screening for hepatitis C is not recommended for all internationally adopted children because this infection occurs in low numbers in most parts of the world, youngsters arriving from certain regions, including China, Russia, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia, should be tested for this infection.
- **Intestinal parasites:** As many as 35% of internationally adopted children have parasites of one type or another, from hookworms to amoeba. Your child should have 3 stool samples collected 2 or 3 days apart and tested for parasites and the eggs of parasites.
- **Tuberculosis (TB):** Many children adopted from other countries come to the United States infected with the bacteria that causes TB. Tuberculosis tends to be worse in young children, and it may come back years later. For this reason, tuberculin skin tests are important for these internationally adopted youngsters. The tuberculin skin test is the most accurate test for finding an infection with the TB bacteria. A positive test means there is an infection. If the tuberculin skin test is positive, your child should have a chest x-ray film to look for lung disease that may be present without symptoms. Chest x-ray films are not needed for healthy, symptom-free adoptees with negative TB skin tests. Many children living in institutions receive the bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine just after they are born. This vaccine is given to stop the spread of TB throughout a child's body if he is infected with the bacteria. This vaccine is rarely used in the United States. Even if a child has been given the BCG vaccine, he should still be tested for TB. If the skin test is positive, the child needs to be evaluated and considered for treatment.
- **Syphilis:** Babies can get syphilis from their mothers at birth and yet have no symptoms. As a result, they may not have been properly diagnosed or adequately treated. Every adoptee from another country should be tested for syphilis, even if the medical record says that the child has already been treated for the disease.
- **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV):** Every internationally adopted child should be screened for HIV, the virus responsible for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- **Other Infections:** A number of bacterial and fungal skin infections are commonly found in adoptees from developing countries. You can examine your new child for infections such as scabies and head lice.

Last Updated 1/9/2012

Source: Immunizations & Infectious Diseases: An Informed Parent's Guide (Copyright © 2006 American Academy of Pediatrics)