

Table 1: Interpretation of AFB smear and NAAT results from first respiratory specimen¹

AFB Smear Result	NAAT Result ²	Presume TB?	Recommendations for TB diagnosis, treatment and isolation
POSITIVE	POSITIVE	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin anti-TB treatment • Obtain a total of 3 respiratory specimens for mycobacterial culture • Continue to implement airborne isolation precautions • Discontinuation of isolation will require at least 14 days of anti-TB treatment and 3 consecutive negative AFB smears
POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	CANNOT BE RULED OUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a 2nd NAAT • Refer to Table 2 to interpret 2nd NAAT result • Discontinuation of isolation not recommended at this time
NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin anti-TB treatment • Obtain a total of 3 respiratory specimens for mycobacterial culture • Continue to implement airborne isolation precautions • Discontinuation of isolation will require at least 5 days of anti-TB treatment and 3 consecutive negative AFB smears
NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	CANNOT BE RULED OUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discontinuation of isolation not recommended at this time • Use clinical judgment whether to begin anti-TB treatment while awaiting culture results • If anti-TB treatment is started, discontinuation of isolation will require 5 days of anti-TB treatment and 3 consecutive negative AFB smears • Consider obtaining a NAAT on a 2nd specimen • Refer to Table 2 to interpret 2nd NAAT result

¹ Three specimens should be collected for all patients evaluated for pulmonary TB, each collected at least 8 hours apart with at least 1 specimen collected in the early morning. At least 1 of these specimens (preferably the first) should be sent for NAAT in addition to AFB smear and culture.

² For specimens with indeterminate or inconclusive results (including detection of inhibitors), repeat NAAT should be performed.