

Table 2: Interpretation of AFB smear and NAAT results from first two respiratory specimens³

AFB Smear Result	NAAT Result ⁴	Presume TB?	Recommendations for TB diagnosis, treatment and isolation
NEGATIVE x 2	NEGATIVE x 2	CANNOT BE RULED OUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clinical judgment whether to begin anti-TB treatment and/or to continue isolation while awaiting culture results • Obtain a total of 3 respiratory specimens for mycobacterial culture prior to discontinuation of isolation • If anti-TB treatment is started, discontinuation of isolation will require 5 days of anti-TB treatment and 3 consecutive negative AFB smears
NEGATIVE x 2	AT LEAST ONE 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 5 days of anti-TB treatment and 3 consecutive negative AFB smears
AT LEAST ONE POSITIVE	AT LEAST ONE 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 14 days of anti-TB treatment and 3 consecutive negative AFB smears
POSITIVE X 2	NEGATIVE x 2	CANNOT BE RULED OUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests an alternative diagnosis of non-tuberculous mycobacteria • Obtain a total of 3 respiratory specimens for mycobacterial culture • Decisions regarding isolation and disposition should be made in consultation with the LAC TB Control Program • Use clinical judgment whether to begin anti-TB treatment and/or to continue isolation while awaiting culture results

³ 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.

⁴ For specimens with indeterminate or inconclusive results (including detection of inhibitors), repeat NAAT should be performed.