

# HEALTH ALERT



**TO:** Physicians and other Health Care Providers

**Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.**

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the office of:

**Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH**  
Health Officer  
Clark County Public Health  
Phone: (360) 397-8412

## Alert categories:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

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## HEALTH ALERT

December 6, 2017

### Active case of Tuberculosis at Wy'east Middle School in Clark County likely to prompt inquiries to local healthcare providers



#### *Summary*

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Clark County Public Health (CCPH) was recently notified of a case of active tuberculosis at Wy'east Middle School in Vancouver. Although we consider this a low-risk scenario, in an abundance of caution, we are screening potential contacts at school and recommending further evaluation for anyone with positive test results. We are working with the Evergreen School District to notify all parents at Wy'east Middle School by letter about the situation, and to address potential questions. This may result in calls to local healthcare providers by parents with concerns about TB.

#### *The following letter was sent to parents and faculty members on December 5*

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Dear Parent or Faculty Member,

We are writing to notify you about a case of active tuberculosis (TB) at Wy'east Middle School. Although the name of the case is confidential to protect the person's privacy, we want you to know that this individual is receiving appropriate testing and treatment. TB is usually spread through close contact over a long period of time. Based on our investigation, it is unlikely that this person has spread TB to others in the school. We believe the risk to faculty and students is low and we currently have no evidence of any other cases at the school.

The next step in our investigation is to provide TB screening to faculty and students who are identified as potential contacts. This screening will help identify anyone who has been infected with TB. Because TB disease does not develop immediately after being infected, treating people early who are infected with TB can prevent them from developing active TB disease. Clark County Public Health is working closely with the school administration to identify any persons who might have been exposed to ensure they are screened for TB infection. We will contact you directly if testing for you or your child is necessary.

#### **What you can do:**

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of active TB disease (For more information about TB, see the enclosed fact sheet on TB from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention). Faculty or parents with concerns about symptoms consistent with TB disease or those who have any questions should contact Clark County Public Health's Communicable Disease staff at 360.397.8182.

Thank you for your partnership,

Clark County Public Health  
Communicable Disease Program

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### ***Testing for those who may have had close contact with the TB case***

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CCPH will make every effort to directly notify all individuals who may have had close contact with this individual to recommend TB testing. In coordination with school administration, CCPH will offer free TB testing clinics on January 8th and 11<sup>th</sup> at Wy'east Middle School.

Some parents may choose to take their child to his/her own healthcare provider for a TB test, in which case the parents are responsible for the cost of testing. We will need documentation of the test results from the provider.

While we believe the risk of transmission to faculty and students is low, we want to minimize any chances for the disease to spread. Testing people who might have been exposed allows us to identify anyone who has been infected and start early treatment to prevent them from developing active TB disease.

### ***Additional information***

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If you have any questions, please contact Clark County Public Health, Communicable Disease Program: phone – (360) 397-8182; fax – (360) 397-8080.

For more information on TB and testing visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/education/professionaltools.htm>.