

May 3, 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian of McGary Middle School Student:

One of the primary responsibilities of the Vanderburgh County Health Department (VCHD) is to monitor potential disease spread in our local community. Through our routine communication with local medical providers and follow-up contact tracing process, it has been determined an individual at McGary Middle School has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis (TB). This individual is now in isolation.

We understand this information is concerning. Please know that even though your child was potentially exposed, not all people exposed to TB become sick. Although TB is spread in a similar way to a cold or flu, it is not as contagious. In most cases, your child would have to spend prolonged periods (around 15 hours per week) in close contact with an infected person to catch the infection. Rest assured, we are working closely with the EVSC, and the school environment at McGary is safe for students and staff to continue active learning. However, we take this very seriously and want to be diligent in our response.

Our best course of action to minimize the risk of additional cases is to ensure that no one else tests positive for TB. **The VCHD strongly encourages all students and staff at McGary to get a blood test for TB. This testing will be provided, at no cost, by the VCHD at McGary, Wednesday, May 10, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** [CLICK HERE](#) to fill out the parent consent electronically or scan the QR code below. If you prefer to complete a hard copy, students will be given a parent consent form tomorrow to be completed and returned to the first period teacher for the blood test to be conducted.

The VCHD will notify families of the result of the blood test for TB. If the test is negative, a second test will be required in August to confirm there has been no TB infection. If the TB test is positive, we recommend that you receive a chest x-ray and a medical evaluation with your regular medical provider to rule out active disease.

Common Questions & Answers

Q: What is TB?

*A: Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bacteria can infect any part of the body, but most of the time it settles in the lungs.*

Q: How is TB transmitted?

A: TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These germs can stay in the air for several hours, depending on the environment.

TB is NOT spread by:

- Shaking someone's hand
- Sharing food or drink
- Touching bed linens or toilet seats
- Sharing toothbrushes

- *Kissing*
- *Touching someone who has TB*

Q: Can I have our family doctor conduct the blood test?

*A: If you prefer, you may call your family physician for testing. This is required so the health department can properly follow-up as needed with this TB investigation. If you choose to have your health care provider test your child for TB, please have the health care provider fax the results of any tests you receive related to this investigation to the VCHD (812-435-6264). The VCHD will **not** cover the cost of testing if families choose this option.*

Q: Since this has been a bad Flu/Covid/RSV season, are you afraid TB could be the next illness to arise?

A: Although TB is spread in a similar way to a cold or flu, it is not as contagious. In most cases, you would have to spend prolonged periods (around 15 hours of contact per week) in close contact with an infected person to catch the infection yourself. For example, TB infections usually spread between family members who live in the same house. However, we take this very seriously and want to be diligent in our response.

Q: Is special cleaning needed?

A: Routine cleaning and disinfection practices are sufficient.

The Vanderburgh County Health Department is the lead agency working through this response. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact us, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., by phone at (812) 435-2400 or by email at <https://vanderburghhealth.org/contact-us-2/>. For more information you may also visit VCHD website at <https://vanderburghhealth.org/tuberculosis-clinic/>.

Sincerely,
Vanderburgh County Health Department
Communicable Disease Division

