



Aug. 27, 2018

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**Media:**

**Dr. Cameron Kaiser will be available for interviews between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 27, in the Palm Springs area. There will also be a health official available for Spanish-language media. Please call 951.712.3705**

## **Staff member at Thermal elementary school diagnosed with active tuberculosis; testing urged for some students, staff**

A staff member at Westside Elementary School in Thermal has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis and Riverside County health officials are working with school representatives to identify students and staff who might have been exposed to the illness.

The staff member is receiving treatment and is expected to recover. The individual is not being identified due to confidentiality requirements.

Riverside County health officials are sending out letters to the parents or guardians of about 160 students who might have been exposed to the illness. The school also will notify staff members who might have been exposed.

Parents who receive the letter from Public Health are being advised to have their child tested at a TB clinic planned at the school at a later date. Those who do not receive notification are considered not to be at risk for exposure, and TB testing is not recommended.

Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser emphasized the risk of transmission is low.

“While the risk of infection is low, it’s important that parents who receive the notification letter get their child tested,” Kaiser said. “The testing is quick and can provide peace of mind for both parents and children.”

Tuberculosis is a disease spread through the air during prolonged, repeated and close contact with an individual who is infected with active tuberculosis. People can contract TB when breathing air exhaled by someone who is sick with the illness. When left untreated, TB can result in serious complications.

TB is not spread by shaking hands, sharing food or drink, or via bed linens or toilet seats. Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. A person with inactive (latent) TB cannot spread it to others.

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