



Ashtabula County Health Department
12 West Jefferson Street
Jefferson, Ohio 44047



Jay Becker, M.P.H.
Health Commissioner

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Thursday March 21, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ashtabula County Public Health Department has identified an individual associated with Geneva Middle School who is suspected of having active tuberculosis (TB). The Health Department is working with the family and the individual's healthcare provider to gather more information. In conjunction with school officials and staff, we are in the process of evaluating students and staff who have potentially been exposed. The most common way to become infected with TB bacteria is by spending a lot of time with a person who has active TB in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation. In general, TB is not easily spread, but if an individual is identified as being an at-risk contact, we will reach out to them. If someone has been exposed to TB, it takes weeks to months for them to develop symptoms.

There is a difference between TB infection and TB disease. People with TB disease are sick from the bacteria that is *active* in their bodies, and they may cough a lot, feel weak, have a fever, lose weight, cough up blood, or have night sweats. People with TB disease are capable of giving the infection to others. People with TB infection (without disease) have the TB bacteria in their bodies, but they are not sick because the bacteria is *inactive*. They cannot spread the TB bacteria to others. About one out of ten people with TB infection becomes sick with TB disease. TB can be treated and cured.

Although it may be a new experience for some, communicable disease investigation is a regular activity for the Ashtabula County Health Department. All counties in Ohio maintain an active TB Control Unit. Ohio sees approximately 150 cases of TB cases annually. The current investigation under way is the standard procedure for a suspected TB case and is an important step in helping prevent the spread of TB.

If you have any questions on this matter, please contact the Ashtabula County Health Department at (440)576-6010 and select option 2 for Nursing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jay Becker, MPH'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jay Becker, MPH
Health Commissioner
Ashtabula County Health Department

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