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CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

# Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each of the medical providers in your organization.

**Thank you**

**Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:**

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH  
**Health Officer**

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH  
**Deputy Health Officer**

Clark County Public Health  
(360) 397-8412

## **Please Distribute**

Categories of Health Alert messages:

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

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for specific incident for 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 ADVISORY 10 December 2010

### Active Tuberculosis in a Local Healthcare Worker

Clark County Public Health is investigating a case of active TB in a Clark County healthcare worker who provided services to patients while infectious. Although we believe the risk of exposure was low, our investigation has identified possible transmission at the healthcare facility. As part of the investigation, we are notifying potentially exposed patients by letter and recommending that they receive a tuberculin skin test. The dates of potential exposure range from early January 2010 to mid July 2010.

During the next few weeks, Clark County Public Health will offer free TB skin tests to the exposed individuals. We will offer the tests at our facility at different dates and times which we will list in the letter to patients.

Some individuals will choose to go to their own healthcare provider for TB screening instead of attending one of these clinics. Consequently, these individuals may contact you for screening. We are asking healthcare providers to assess these individuals for TB infection. A TB skin test of 5mm or greater is considered positive in recent contacts of active TB. A chest x-ray and TB assessment is recommended for individuals who have a positive TB skin test. If you have any questions about the assessment, please contact us at the number below. Patients who have documented positive skin tests in the past do not require retesting.

Please consider active tuberculosis in your differential diagnosis if adult patients have any of the following symptoms: cough, especially cough > 3 weeks in duration; fatigue, hemoptysis, diminished appetite, weight loss, night sweats and unexplained fever and chills. Symptoms in young children can be less specific, but can include cough, especially cough > 3 weeks in duration, and weight loss (failure to thrive). Compared to adults, children are more likely to have extrapulmonary tuberculosis, including tuberculosis meningitis and adenopathy.

As it is challenging to track which patients received TB screening when not attending Public Health's TB screening clinic, it would be helpful to our investigation if you would notify our TB unit when screening any patients presenting with a history of a possible exposure at a health care facility or a letter from the provider by calling (360) 397-8022.

For further information on tuberculosis, please refer to the CDC TB website at <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/guidelines>.

Thank you for your partnership.