

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news for May 3, 2022.

Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence spoke to the Board Of County Commissioners Yesterday for their weekly public health briefing. Case rates are HIGH. Dr. Berry now strongly recommends that if you are indoors with more people than a small dinner party – say 5 or 6 people, regardless of vaccination status – that you mask up. And if you are in an indoor setting with many people, it should be a well-fitting high-quality mask: N-95, KN-95 or similar. You can look at the latest numbers, mask recommendations, and links to report positive COVID test results at the the counties websites: (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1429/COVID-19> and <https://www.clallam.net/coronavirus/>). And you can listen to the entire COVID-19 update on the KPTZ website.

Washington's (tuberculosis (TB) cases are on the rise. TB reporting decreased in 2020 during the first year of the pandemic. Though efforts to prevent COVID-19 may also have reduced the spread of TB, the decrease could also have been due to delayed or missed TB diagnoses because of strains on the health care system. Some people with TB may also have been misdiagnosed as having COVID-19.

Cases rose notably beginning in 2021, when 199 cases of TB disease were reported in Washington, a 22% increase from 2020. Thus far in 2022, 70 cases have been reported and officials continue to monitor the situation closely. Seventeen new cases of TB disease all have connections with each other and several Washington state prisons, making it the state's largest outbreak in the last 20 years. "It's been 20 years since we saw a cluster of TB cases like this," says Dr. Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, Washington State Chief Science Officer. "The pandemic has likely contributed to the rise in cases and the outbreak in at least one correctional facility, increased access to TB testing and treatment in the community is going to be key to getting TB under control."

TB is preventable, treatable, and curable. Like COVID-19, TB is spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the organism is breathed in by others. But unlike COVID-19, more prolonged exposure to someone with TB disease is typically necessary for infection to occur. Symptoms of TB disease can include coughing – with or without blood – and chest pain. General symptoms also include fever, night sweats, weight loss, and tiredness. You can also contract TB and it can be dormant in your system for quite some time before you actually develop the disease. TB can infect anyone, but people at increased risk for exposure include:

- Those in close contact with someone who has TB disease.
- People who are from, or frequently travel to, areas of the world where TB is more common.
- People who live or work in a setting where there is more possible exposure to TB, such as homeless shelters, correctional facilities, and nursing homes.

The Department of Health encourages people at risk for TB to get tested and, if the outcome is positive, to get treatment (which can take six months.) More information about TB can be found at Facts About TB > Washington State Department of Health (<https://doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/illness-and-disease-z/tuberculosis-tb/facts-about-tb>).

Addendum:

If infection does occur, the person exposed will most likely develop inactive TB (also called latent TB infection), which has no symptoms and is not contagious. When people with inactive TB do not receive timely diagnosis and treatment, the infection could develop into active TB disease which can then cause symptoms and spread to others. An estimated 200,000 people in Washington have inactive TB. Treatment for Tuberculosis takes six months at a minimum. If treatment isn't diligently followed, symptoms are likely to become more severe and patients risk continuing to be contagious, increasing the likelihood of TB further spreading within the community. Incomplete treatment can also contribute to the spread of antibiotic resistant strains of TB.

Anderson Lake has been closed to fishing and other recreation just five days after the lowland lake fishing season opened. Elevated levels of the potent nerve toxin Anatoxin-a were detected in a water sample taken from Anderson Lake on April 25. As reported this weekend in the *Peninsula Daily News* Anatoxin-a can result in illness and death in people and animals when ingested. “Danger – Keep Out of Lake” signs at access points to the park now alert visitors of the potential hazards. Fishing, boating and swimming are prohibited until the toxins dissipate and the lake is deemed safe for recreation.

The 410-acre Anderson Lake State Park remains open for other recreational activities such as horseback riding, hiking, and birdwatching. Jefferson County Public Health has monitored local lakes for cyanobacteria since 2007 after two dogs drank the water and died in 2006. The 60-acre Anderson Lake has had closures every year since then. Crocker, Gibbs, Leland and Tarboo lakes have all been assessed for cyanobacteria activity this year and researchers found no evidence of blooms forming. The blue-green algae found in Anderson Lake is naturally occurring and found in freshwater lakes across Washington state. However, sometimes those algae blooms produce toxins, which are released into the water. The cause of the high amount of toxins in Anderson Lake isn’t fully understood. One theory is that runoff from a dairy farm that operated near the lake for more than 50 years contributed a high amount of phosphorus to the lake, which fueled the growth of the blue-green algae.

No toxic blue-green algae has been reported in Clallam County, where health officers do not test for toxins. Instead, they visually monitor lakes for signs of algae bloom. Algae blooms in Clallam County lakes should be reported to the Clallam County Department of Health and Human Services’ environmental health division at 360-417-2258.

Addendum:

The toxin level is 1.30 micrograms per liter, which is just above the state recreational threshold of 1 microgram per liter. The bloom of cyanobacteria in the lake near Chimacum contains a toxin-producing species of algae, including *Dolichospermum* (formerly *Anabaena*) and *Aphanizomenon*. To check the status of Jefferson County lakes and learn more about toxic cyanobacteria monitoring, consult the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/723/Lake-Water-Quality>) or call 360-385-9444. For fishing seasons and regulations, see the state Department of Fish and Wildlife website (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing>). Information on visiting Anderson Lake State Park is available at <https://www.parks.wa.gov/240/Anderson-Lake>.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening, and have a good Tuesday.