



September 22, 2016

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Laboratory results confirm diagnosis of Hansen's disease for Jurupa Valley child

Laboratory findings have confirmed the diagnosis of Hansen's disease, also known as leprosy, in a Jurupa Valley child. The findings were made after test results were received this week from the National Hansen's Disease (Leprosy) Laboratory Research Program in Baton Rouge.

A second child was suspected of having the illness but there is no indication at this time that the youngster was infected, said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County's public health officer.

"None of our recommendations to the school or parents have changed," Kaiser said. "It is incredibly difficult to contract leprosy. The school was safe before this case arose and it still is."

Hansen's disease is transmitted through prolonged contact. Over 95 percent of the population already is naturally immune and if a patient is taking antibiotics for the disease, the bacteria cannot be transmitted to other people.