



September 19, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians of Students,

Back to school can be an exciting time of year. Kids reconnect with friends and teachers have a fresh start to shape young minds. As most parents know, back to school also means the sharing of germs. We all tend to feel the pain of sick children more during the school year than in the summer.

Madison County Public Health (MCPH) monitors illness patterns during the year for the entire county. We work with staff at all Madison County schools to keep students healthy and in school as much as possible. By tracking illnesses, we know when to expect a rise in students reporting colds, the flu, and stomach bugs. The number of people getting sick in the county goes up and down during the year. However, an “outbreak” can happen when the number of people getting sick increases beyond what we would normally expect. But it’s not just the *number* of people that makes an outbreak. People involved in an outbreak of sickness often share something in common – for example, they are all on the same sports team/club or share the same meal. When more people get sick than what we expect and they share something in common we often call this an outbreak. We investigate outbreaks for two reasons. First, we look to see if there is something we can fix to stop additional people from getting sick. Second, we look for the cause of the outbreak to help prevent things from going wrong again in the future.

During the school year MCPH typically investigates outbreaks in every school. Most of these are very small outbreaks. [Right now MCPH is investigating an increase of gastroenteritis \(usually called the stomach bug\) among students, parents, and faculty who are involved with London Middle School football. While this does not appear to be an ongoing illness outbreak, it is important for us to look at what caused this so that we can help prevent it from happening again. We will be working with school staff over the next few days and we may call or email you as we investigate this outbreak.](#)

MCPH’s goal is to help prevent illnesses and to make sure our county residents have the chance to live healthy lives. Please contact us by phone (740-852-3065) or email (info@madisonpublichealth.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Chris Cook, MPH, RS
Health Commissioner

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Health Commissioner

Dr. James Kaehr, MD
Medical Director

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Our Mission

We are committed to monitoring and responding to our community's health and wellness needs through innovative services, education, collaboration, and compassionate care.