



A Day in the Life of a Public Health employee

Each April communities around the country join together to celebrate the many contributions of our local public health departments. Public health is a part of our everyday lives, from the water we drink and the air we breathe to the vaccines that help us stay healthy. Here is a glimpse of a Day in the Life of one dedicated Mid-Michigan District Health Department employee who proudly serves the residents of Gratiot County each and every day.

Meet Lisa

Name: Lisa Mikesell, R.N.

Occupation: Communicable Disease Nurse

Employer: Mid-Michigan District Health Department, Ithaca Office



As always, my day began by checking phone messages, emails and the fax machine for any reports of new animal bites - tis the season! I also expect to begin receiving reports of people being exposed to bats at any time, to which I provide follow-up and arrange treatment if necessary to prevent rabies (which is fatal) and provide education regarding prevention.

I then check the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS) to see if area physicians or labs have any new cases of reportable diseases in Gratiot County. For example, I am currently following up on new reports of sexually transmitted diseases, influenza A, a suspect case of tuberculosis and viral meningitis. Follow-up includes contacting physicians to assist with arranging treatment, and calling the client to provide follow-up education. I also arrange for testing and treatment for family members or others who may have been exposed to the disease.

After that, I begin inputting required weekly communicable disease reports from schools into the event log and review the information to identify any potential outbreaks. During this time I received a phone call from a local physician requesting additional H1N1 vaccine. I finalized the order and received a call from a person in the community needing some diabetic education. I talked to her about the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, what target range she should keep her blood sugars in, discussed what to do in case of a hypoglycemia reaction as well as follow-up care, and informed her to contact her doctor for more information. I took yet another call from a person in the community asking what to do for the treatment of scabies. I explained how to use the cream that was prescribed and how to clean the environment as well as directed them to the scabies manual on our website.

To end my day I made a telephone call to the Gratiot County Commission on Aging to coordinate and schedule multiple H1N1 clinics in the community. As any public health nurse knows, immunizations are the key to preventing disease.