Hepatitis A Outbreak

Southeast Michigan began to see an outbreak of Hepatitis A in August of 2016. Since that time, the outbreak has spread to other areas of Michigan, including right here in Mid-Michigan. As of May 2, 2018, there have been six confirmed cases of Hepatitis A within the Mid Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) region—three in Clinton County and three in Gratiot County.

According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), a total of 828 cases of Hepatitis A have been reported statewide, with 665 of those resulting in hospitalization and 26 cases resulting in death. Because of this large outbreak in the state, MDHHS has provided financial assistance to involved health departments. The MMDHD is using these funds to provide clinics in the community as well as to provide more education to the public on risk and prevention.

It is important for the community to be aware of the risks and symptoms of Hepatitis A. Those at risk include users of illicit drugs, men who have sex with men, those who are homeless or live in temporary housing, those who are or have recently been incarcerated, and those with chronic liver disease. Symptoms can include nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, dark urine, pale-colored stool, and jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes).

The best way to protect oneself from this disease is by getting vaccinated. For more information on Hepatitis A or clinic schedules, visit www.mmdhd.org or contact your county MMDHD branch office.

Breastfeeding Support Services Program

The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) is pleased to announce a new Breastfeeding Support Services Program that provides assistance to new mothers and their babies. The program is led by Registered Dietitian Angie Martin, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). As an IBCLC, Angie is an expert in breastfeeding support and education, and even has her own personal experience with breastfeeding. The new program accepts clients with or without health insurance. Services are available in the home or at mom and baby’s nearest MMDHD branch office.

Breastfeeding provides more benefits to both women and infants than formula use. Breast milk is easier for infants to digest and provides antibodies that protect the infant from bacterial and viral infections. Infants who are breastfed have a reduced risk of asthma, obesity, diabetes, allergies and sudden infant death syndrome. Women who breastfeed are at a lower risk for heart disease, diabetes, ovarian and breast cancer.

Breastfeeding can be challenging, but also very rewarding. With the Breastfeeding Support Services Program, new mothers can receive the support and education they need to be successful. For more information about this program or to make an appointment, please call Angie Martin, RD, IBCLC at (989) 763-2384.
**Tick Season is Here**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) wants to remind residents to protect themselves from tick bites now that spring is here. Rates of tick-borne illnesses, primarily Lyme Disease, are increasing across the state. MDHHS reports that cases have risen from 80 in 2012 to over 300 in 2017. Clinton County, along with counties in western and southern Michigan are designated “endemic counties,” meaning there is a known risk. Gratiot and Montcalm Counties are considered to have “potential risk.”

The most obvious symptom of Lyme Disease is a bulls-eye rash (erythema migrans). Other symptoms include fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain, and fatigue. Some cases may be severe, affecting the heart, nervous system or causing arthritis.

For protection from tick bites, residents are encouraged to follow these tips:
- Avoid tick-infested areas, including overgrown grass, brush and leaf litter
- Use insect repellent containing DEET
- Perform daily tick checks after being outdoors and be familiar with tick removal techniques
- Bathe or shower after outdoor activity and wash clothing in hot water

For more information on tick-borne diseases, visit [www.cdc.gov/lyme](http://www.cdc.gov/lyme) or [www.michigan.gov/lyme](http://www.michigan.gov/lyme)

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**Lead Poisoning Prevention**

Lead poisoning puts young children at risk for learning and behavioral issues including ADHD, lower IQ, slowed growth and development, hearing and speech difficulties, as well as anemia. In 2016, over 5,700 Michigan children under the age of six were found to have elevated blood lead levels (EBLL). In the Mid Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) region in 2016, 32 children were found to have blood lead levels exceeding 5 ug/dL, an indicator of lead poisoning.

Lead is a naturally occurring element. It can be found in paint, soil, drinking water, toys, candy and candy wrappers, imported spices and folk remedies to name a few. In the United States the two largest sources of lead exposure for children are: 1) airborne lead from the combustion of gasoline and 2) leaded chips and dust from old lead paint. Both of these sources contribute to lead in the soil. Children are at higher risk of harm from lead exposure because their developing brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the harm that lead can cause. Lead is also a concern for pregnant women because it can pass from the mother to her fetus.

Children can breathe or swallow lead particles. The main absorption route is through the intestinal tract. Approximately 73% of the total body lead volume is stored in the bones. Diets high in calcium, vitamin C and iron can help to prevent the lead from absorbing and becoming stored in the body.

At MMDHD, children in the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) are screened for lead at ages 12 and 24 months using a capillary blood draw. Children who were not tested at age 1 or 2 must be tested (capillary or venous) at least once between ages 3-5, unless medically contraindicated. Parents complete a survey which includes questions about their home environment and are provided with nutrition education to learn how a healthy diet can help to prevent lead absorption. Per Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations, children who are found to have an EBLL are referred to a case manager, who provides follow up testing, monitoring and education to ensure the child’s continued health and safety.

For more information on lead prevention through MMDHD, contact Becky Stoddard, RN, at (989)227-3111. Additional information can be found at: [www.michigan.gov/lead](http://www.michigan.gov/lead) or [www.michigan.gov/leadsafe](http://www.michigan.gov/leadsafe)

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**What is Children’s Special Health Care Services?**

Children’s Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) is a collaboration of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Mid Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD). It’s purpose is to provide case management services for children and some adults with chronic health issues, who also have special health care needs.

Among the benefits of CSHCS are assistance with: paying specialty medical bills, coordinating services from multiple providers, learning about specialty providers, coordinating health insurance benefits and covering co-pays and deductibles. Families of all incomes are eligible to join, even if they have other health insurance. The child’s medical condition, not the parents’ income, determines if one qualifies for the program.

For more information on qualifications for this program, contact a CSHCS representative at:
- Clinton County Branch Office: (989) 227-3121
- Gratiot County Branch Office: (989) 875-1024
- Montcalm County Branch Office: (989) 831-3643
- MDHHS Family Phone Line: 1-800-359-3722
- Or visit [www.michigan.gov/cshcs](http://www.michigan.gov/cshcs)

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Children’s Special Health Care Services

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.