

# Connecting Point

A MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



August 2018

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

615 N. State St. Ste. 2  
Stanton, MI 48888  
(989) 831-5237

**CLINTON**

Branch Office  
1307 E. Townsend Rd.  
St. Johns, MI 48879  
(989) 224-2195

**GRATIOT**

Branch Office  
151 Commerce Drive  
Ithaca, MI 48847  
(989) 875-3681

**MONTCALM**

Branch Office  
615 N. State St., Ste. 1  
Stanton, MI 48888  
(989) 831-5237

Visit [www.mmdhd.org](http://www.mmdhd.org) for more information on agency programs, services and health issues.



## PFAS Response

Poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are part of a large group of chemicals that have been used for years in firefighting, manufacturing and household products. Michiganders have heard of PFAS because sites with very high levels of PFAS in drinking water have been found in places like Rockford and Camp Grayling. In recent years, experts have become increasingly concerned by the potential effects of high levels of PFAS on human health.

We are in the early stages of learning about PFAS, but we do know that two kinds of PFAS are associated with increased risk of chronic health problems such as low birthweight in infants, certain cancers and liver, thyroid and cholesterol problems. Because of this, the State of Michigan is one of the first states in the nation to establish a clean-up standard for PFAS in groundwater used for drinking.



Because PFAS has been used widely in many products, most people already have some level of PFAS in their bodies. Therefore, it is important not to get much *more* PFAS in our bodies. The Environmental Protection Agency has established a Lifetime Health Advisory level for PFAS in drinking water of 70 parts per trillion.

If a drinking water supply such as a well has more than 70 parts per trillion of PFAS, sink and whole house filters are available which can reduce the PFAS to a safer level. There are other good reasons for considering a filter. The filters cut down on other toxic chemicals and germs. The Mid-Michigan District Health Department is currently working with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to investigate PFAS at the Central Sanitary Landfill and the Ithaca Sanitary Landfill. So far no homes have been found with levels of PFAS over the Lifetime Health Advisory. Nonetheless, we have been offering filters to homes with low levels of PFAS while the investigations continue.

If you are concerned about PFAS, there are other things you can do to reduce your exposure. Some of your furniture probably has a coating containing PFAS. Regularly vacuuming will reduce PFAS particles. And you can avoid buying consumer products with PFAS. There are many websites that identify products likely to contain PFAS. For more information on PFAS, visit [www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse](http://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse)

## Back to School Immunizations

The new school year for many students will begin in late August. With that in mind, it's especially important to make sure school aged children are up-to-date on their immunizations before classes start. Health care providers are reminded to assess the immunization status of school-age patients at every visit, and provide immunizations when they are due. Parents are reminded of the importance of protecting their kids from exposure to diseases that are easily spread in small spaces like a classroom. Immunization appointments are available through the Mid-Michigan District Health Department by calling one's local branch office.



## Prescription for Health

*Prescription for Health* is a new initiative that strives to improve the health of Gratiot County residents by increasing access to fresh produce and providing education about healthy eating habits.



With a \$4,300 grant from the Gratiot County Community Foundation, patients with diet-related health conditions are identified by their health care provider and referred to the program. Participants attend an orientation and a series of six “Eat Healthy, Be Active” classes taught by MSU Extension. At each class, participants are given coupons that allow them to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at the St. Louis Farmer’s Market. The total value of the coupons over the course of the program is \$100 per person. Transportation vouchers are available for participants living in the Alma and St. Louis area who may need travel assistance.

*Prescription for Health* is an initiative of *Live Well Gratiot*, a collaborative effort to improve the health of Gratiot County residents. For more information, contact Cheryl Thelen, Health Educator, at (989) 831-3634 or [cthelen@mmdhd.org](mailto:cthelen@mmdhd.org)

## Bat Alert

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is reporting an increase in bats testing positive for rabies.



As of July 12th, 29 bats and two skunks in the state have been identified as being rabid. In 2017, a total of 38 animals tested positive for rabies through the MDHHS lab.

Rabies is a viral disease in mammals which is transmitted through the bite or scratch of an infected animal. It is fatal to humans when left untreated. If a bite does occur, or if a bat is found near a sleeping person, an unattended child or an impaired person, it should be captured as it may need to be tested.

In order to test for rabies, the bat’s head must be left intact, so capture requires thoughtful procedures. A video on safe bat capture can be found on the health department’s website at [www.mmdhd.org](http://www.mmdhd.org).

Once captured, residents should contact the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) prior to bringing the bat in for testing. A communicable disease nurse is available to assist and provide additional information on testing and post-exposure treatment. Nurses can be reached in Clinton County at (989) 227-3111, Gratiot County at (989) 875-1019 and Montcalm County at (989) 831-3615.

For more information on rabies and a map of positive animals in Michigan, visit [www.michigan.gov/rabies](http://www.michigan.gov/rabies)

## New WIC Guidelines

The Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) is a federal health and nutrition program that has proven to show a positive impact on pregnancy outcomes and child growth and development. For pregnant women and children under the age of five, WIC provides:

- Nutritious foods valued at \$30-\$112 per month
- Nutrition education
- Healthcare referrals
- Breastfeeding promotion and support

In order to qualify for WIC benefits, pregnant women and children under the age of five must be Medicaid eligible or meet these income requirements:

Family Size*	Hourly	Monthly	Annual
1	\$10.79	\$1,872	\$22,459
2	\$14.63	\$2,538	\$30,451
3	\$18.48	\$3,204	\$38,443
4	\$22.32	\$3,870	\$46,435
5	\$26.13	\$4,536	\$54,427
6	\$30.00	\$5,202	\$62,419

\*Pregnant women are counted as one + the number of infants expected when determining income eligibility for the total economic unit through 6/30/19.

### 2018-2019 WIC Annual Income Guidelines

MMDHD holds WIC clinics at the Stanton, Ithaca and St. Johns offices, as well as in outlying areas of Greenville, Howard City, Alma and North Lansing.

For more information about the WIC program, contact Dena Kent, RN, at (989) 831-3609 or by email at [dkent@mmdhd.org](mailto:dkent@mmdhd.org)



For more information about these and other Health Department programs, contact:

Mark W. (Marcus) Cheatham, Ph.D. Health Officer  
Mid-Michigan District Health Department  
615 N. State Road, Suite 2  
Stanton, MI 48888-9702  
(989) 831-3614  
E-mail: [mcheatham@mmdhd.org](mailto:mcheatham@mmdhd.org)

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