

Connecting Point

A MID MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



December 2016

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 for more information on agency programs, services and health issues.

It's Not Too Late For A Flu Shot!

Are you still on the fence when it comes to getting a flu shot? If so, don't wait too long to make up your mind, because like it or not, flu season is right around the corner.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are many good reasons why everyone, age six months and older, should get a seasonal flu shot. Here are just a few:

Reason #1: A bout of the flu can make you quite miserable and put you out of commission for up to a week. Symptoms may include high fever, chills, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, and even vomiting and diarrhea. Why take the chance?

Reason #2: Children less than six months of age are too young to get a flu vaccine, so the best way to protect them is to vaccinate those around them, including parents, family members, and those who care for them.

Reason #3: Contrary to what some may think, receiving the flu vaccine does not "give" the person the flu.

Reason #4: Research has shown that the absolute best way to prevent the flu and it's potentially life-threatening complications is for everyone, including healthy people, age six months and older, to get vaccinated.

Reason #5: For those at high-risk for developing serious flu complications, such as the elderly, young children, pregnant women, those with weakened immune systems, and people with certain health conditions, vaccination is especially important.

Reason #6: It's never been more convenient to get the flu vaccine. It's available at a variety of places, including your doctor's office, many pharmacies, or the Mid-Michigan District Health Department.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department participates with the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, as well as many types of insurances. We offer Fluzone High Dose, preservative-free options, and the "regular" flu shot. Please call your nearest branch office for more information, to see if we participate with your insurance, or to schedule an appointment.

Clinton County Branch
1307 E. Townsend Road
St. Johns
(989) 224-2195

Gratiot County Branch
151 Commerce Drive
Ithaca
(989) 875-3681

Montcalm County Branch
615 N. State Street
Stanton
(989) 831-5237

For more information, you may also visit www.mmdhd.org.



Lead Poisoning Is Preventable

Right now in the U.S., nearly half a million children, ages one to five, have blood lead levels high enough to damage their health. Could your child be one of them?

Low levels of lead can be found in the soil, the air, the water, and on things we touch. Most often, lead from these sources isn't cause for concern; but when higher levels are present, it can be very harmful, especially to young children.

A lead-poisoned child may seem healthy, but could have learning and behavior problems, slowed growth and development, hearing and speech problems, headaches, weight loss, irritability, tiredness, hyperactivity, and even damage to the brain and nervous system. These problems can lead to lower IQ, decreased ability to pay attention and underperformance in school.

The majority of children with lead poisoning live in or spend a lot of time in a home built before 1978. Lead can be found in an older home's drinking water if it is supplied by lead pipes and plumbing fixtures. But usually, the culprit is lead-based paint, which can be toxic, especially to a young child. The older the home, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint.

The most common places for lead-based paint to be lurking are in an older home's windows, cupboards, doors, porches, and outdoor surfaces. Something as simple as opening and closing a window painted with lead-based paint can send lead dust into the air. The dust then settles to the floor and gets on children's hands and toys, eventually making its way into the mouth.

Lead can be found in other places, too, as in some toys and toy jewelry. Certain hobbies and jobs that involve working with lead-based products can pose a danger if the dust is brought into the home on clothing, shoes, hair or skin.

What can be done to reduce a child's exposure to lead?

- Before buying an older home, ask for a lead inspection and be sure to have the water tested.
- Renovate safely. Activities like sanding, cutting and replacing windows can create hazardous lead dust. If planning on renovating an older home, use contractors certified by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Stay up-to-date on current recalls by visiting the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website at www.cpsc.gov and remove recalled toys and toy jewelry as appropriate.
- Get children tested at one and two years of age, even if they seem healthy. If testing wasn't completed by age two, a blood lead test should be completed between the ages of three and six. Private insurance coverage varies, but if the child is enrolled in Medicaid, the test will be covered. MMDHD offers lead blood tests to children enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. To see if we can assist you with your child's lead test, or for more information, call 989-224-2195 in Clinton County, 989-875-3681 in Gratiot County, and 989-831-5237 in Montcalm County.

Children's Special Health Care Services

Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) strives to enable individuals with special health care needs to have improved health outcomes and an enhanced quality of life through the appropriate use of the CSHCS system of care. CSHCS, a collaboration of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and MMDHD, is a program that many do not know exists. It provides case management services, covering over 2,600 special health care diagnoses and is for children from birth to age 21. It also serves some adults with cystic fibrosis or certain blood clotting disorders.

CSHCS is able to help with:

- Paying specialty medical bills
- Deductibles
- Finding specialty services and providers
- Coordinating services from multiple providers
- Transportation costs
- Locating support groups
- Identifying community-based services to help care for the child at home and maintain normal routines

Families of *ALL* incomes are eligible to join even if they have other health insurance. This is because the child's medical condition, not the parents' income, determines if one qualifies for the program. For some families with higher incomes, there may be a small yearly fee. Parents are encouraged to contact their local CSHCS staff to determine if CSHCS will be beneficial for their family.

For more information on qualifications for this program, contact a MMDHD CSHCS representative at:

- Clinton County Branch Office: 989-227-3121
- Gratiot County Branch Office: 989-875-1004
- Montcalm County Branch Office: 989-831-3643
- Family Phone Line: 1-800-359-3722
- Or, visit www.michigan.gov/cshcs



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

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