

Daily News

Thursday, July 28, 2022

WIC services make a difference in Montcalm County

Submitted by the Mid-Michigan
District Health Department

Each month, more than 200,000 moms, babies and children less than 5 years of age receive much needed assistance from the Michigan Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.

This federally funded program serves low and moderate income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Participants receive an electronic benefits card (EBT) for purchasing nutritious foods, such as milk, cheese, eggs, fortified cereal, peanut butter, whole grain breads and tortillas, fruit and vegetable juices, fresh fruits and vegetables, and formula at approved retail grocery stores and pharmacies. Participants also receive breastfeeding support, nutrition education, healthcare referrals, health counseling and immunizations. WIC also provides coupons to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets through the Project Fresh program.

WIC has a proven track record of demonstrating a positive effect on pregnancy outcomes, and child growth and development. Research shows that the

earlier a pregnant woman receives nutritional benefits from WIC, the more likely she is to seek prenatal care and deliver a normal weight infant. For every dollar spent by this program, more than three dollars in subsequent health care costs are saved.

Additional benefits of the program include:

- Higher immunization rates against childhood diseases.
- Lower rate of anemia among children between the ages of six months and 5 years old.
- Significant improvement in children's dietary intake of vitamins and nutrients.
- Significant increase in the number of women receiving adequate prenatal care.
- Dramatic decrease in the infant mortality among Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Improvement in weight gain and dietary intake in pregnant and postpartum women.
- Decrease in low birth weight and pre-term births.

To find out if you qualify for WIC, visit www.mmdhd.org or call (989) 831-5237 for the health department's Montcalm County branch office.

Daily News

Saturday, July 30, 2022

Keep cool when temperatures soar

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By [The Daily News Staff](#) | on July 30, 2022

Submitted by the Mid-Michigan District Health Department

Many people look forward to summer's hot, steamy weather, but it's important to remember that high temperatures, especially when combined with high levels of humidity, can be dangerous. When temperatures soar to a sizzling 80 degrees or more, the body can easily become overheated, resulting in severe heat illness and even death.

People at highest risk for heat-related illness are the homeless, the elderly, the very young, pregnant women, and people with mental illness, high blood pressure, and chronic diseases. But even young, healthy people can get sick from the heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities or work outside during hot weather.

Dehydration is the first stage of heat-related illness and occurs when fluids are lost by sweating, and not replaced. Symptoms include dry mouth, thirst, headache, dizziness, cramps, and excessive fatigue.

The next stage of heat-related illness is heat exhaustion and usually occurs when people exercise or work in warm, humid conditions where excessive sweating leads to fluid loss. Symptoms include heavy sweating, flushed complexion, clammy skin, muscle cramps, elevated body temperature, headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion, weakness, and fatigue.

If dehydration or heat exhaustion is suspected, move the person to a shaded or air-conditioned area, have them drink plenty of water, apply a cold washcloth to their forehead, and consult a physician if symptoms persist or worsen.

Heat stroke, the most severe stage of heat-related illness, occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature. The body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Symptoms can include vomiting; headache; chills; confusion; dizziness; red, hot, dry, or moist skin; a rapid pulse; or loss of consciousness. If heat stroke is suspected, call 9-1-1 immediately and move the person to a cool or air-conditioned area.

The most important thing you can do on hot summer days is to drink plenty of water and limit time outdoors in direct sunlight. If you must go outside, wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and take frequent breaks. Avoid alcohol and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar as they can cause you to dehydrate faster.

Be sure to check on elderly friends, family, and neighbors during a heat wave. And never leave children, the elderly, or pets in a vehicle in extreme heat, even with the windows rolled down. Temperatures inside a parked car can reach 120 degrees or more in a matter of minutes and can lead to heat stroke or death.

Daily News

Thursday, August 11, 2022

Include immunizations on back-to-school checklist

Submitted by the Mid-Michigan District Health Department

Summer sure does fly by; so much fun to be had and so little time.

The lazy days of summer really do go by in the blink of an eye. But on the bright side, there are several weeks of summer left for most families to enjoy, so take that camping trip, spend the day at the beach or go for a long bike ride. Just don't forget to make sure your kids are up-to-date on their immunizations before the bell rings on the first day of school.

All children need protection from vaccine-preventable diseases, like tetanus, pertussis, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, meningitis, chickenpox and COVID-19. Protection is especially important for those entering a childcare facility, kindergarten or seventh grade, and for those changing school districts, as certain vaccinations are mandatory.

If your child is college-bound, make sure they are up-to-date on their immunizations as well, including meningococcal vaccines. Some diseases can spread quickly in settings like dorm rooms and classrooms, so be aware that many colleges and universities have vaccination requirements for school entry.

It is the health department's responsibility to ensure that the public is protected from vaccine-preventable diseases and that parents make informed decisions about whether to vaccinate their child. If your child is not immunized:

- They are at greater risk of catching vaccine-preventable diseases.
- They can infect others, including infants and the elderly, who are at-risk of suffering a more severe reaction.
- They may be excluded from school or childcare for

several days or weeks to prevent catching or spreading a vaccine-preventable disease.

Diseases like pertussis, measles, and chicken pox are making a comeback, due in part to an increase in the number of children who are not being immunized. The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) strongly encourages parents to immunize their children, but ultimately, it's the parent's decision. Parents who do not want their child to be immunized will need to present the school with a signed waiver. If immunization is being waived because of a medical reason, your child's doctor can sign the waiver. If immunization is being waived for religious or personal reasons, the health department will need to sign the waiver. The purpose of the waiver is to make sure that parents have an opportunity to speak with a

professional about vaccinations and discuss any concerns.

The MMDHD provides immunizations by appointment to those with Medicaid and without insurance. A small fee may apply, but no child is turned away because of an inability to pay. Children 18 years and younger may be eligible for the Vaccines for Children program, which provides vaccines at no cost to kids who might not be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. To qualify, a child must have Medicaid, have no health insurance, be under-insured, or be an American Indian or Alaskan Native. Those with certain private insurance plans may also be able to get vaccinated at the health department; just be sure to call first to see if your insurance is accepted.

For more information, or to make an immunization or waiver appointment, call MMDHD at (989) 831-5237 in Montcalm County.

Daily News

Thursday, August 11, 2022

Drug take back event encourages safe disposal of unwanted meds

Drop-off site to be at
Leppinks Food Center
in Howard City

Submitted by Spectrum Health

HOWARD CITY — Everyone is encouraged to clean out their medicine cabinets and take advantage of a free drug take-back event on Aug. 17 in Howard City.

Unused and unwanted items may be dropped off at Leppinks Food Center at 730 Shaw St. from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. that day.

This free and anonymous public service is sponsored by Spectrum Health United and Kelsey Hospitals, Mont-

calm Prevention Collaborative, Montcalm Care Network and the Montcalm County Sheriff's Office.

Items accepted include over the counter and prescription medication, liquids, ointments, inhalers, needles and pet medications. Full needle containers can be exchanged for empty containers while supplies last.

Naxolone (Narcan) will also be available free to community members after education about the overdose prevention medication is received. Naxolone quickly restores normal breathing to someone who may be suffering a life-threatening accidental overdose from prescription and other opioids.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency advises the public not to flush medications down the toilet or throw them in the trash because doing so poses potential safety and health hazards.

For more information, call (231) 592-4204.

Daily News

Thursday, August 11, 2022

Montcalm Prevention Collaborative conducts tobacco vendor compliance checks

Submitted by the Montcalm Prevention Collaborative

Montcalm Prevention Collaborative, a community substance use disorder prevention coalition in Montcalm County, recently conducted tobacco vendor compliance checks in the county.

The coalition carries out yearly undercover buy inspections of tobacco retailers to ensure that they comply with restrictions on sales to minors. They also conduct advertising and labeling inspections to ensure that retailers comply with limitations on marketing of tobacco products. First time violations during a com-

pliance check generally results in a warning letter.

Thirty-three checks were completed this past April with a 90% no-sell rate. The Montcalm Prevention Collaborative thanks these tobacco retailers in Montcalm County for following the law and helping to save the lives of our underage youth.

Federal law and now a state of Michigan law, prohibits the sale of tobacco to anyone under the age of 21.

The Montcalm Prevention Collaborative wants to remind you that the use of tobacco is highly addictive and the leading cause of early death.

Daily News

Friday, August 12, 2022

As summer comes to an end, avoid mosquitoes, diseases they carry

Submitted by the Mid-Michigan District Health Department

As we head into the final days of summer, the Mid-Michigan District Health Department would like to remind everyone to continue to avoid mosquito bites and the diseases they can carry, like West Nile Virus and Eastern equine encephalitis.

West Nile Virus is a disease that is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people who contract the virus have no symptoms, but some may become ill three to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms of the virus can include high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, stiff neck, and a severe headache. More serious complications include meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and brain linings) and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). These diseases usually require hospitalization, can be life threatening, and even fatal.

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a rare disease transmitted to mammals, such as people and horses, by the bite of an infected mosquito. It takes four to 10 days after the bite occurs to develop signs of EEE, but most

people show either no or mild symptoms like a fever. Severe cases of EEE include the sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, vomiting, encephalitis (swelling of the brain) or meningitis (swelling of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord). Illness may then progress into seizures and coma.

One of the best ways you can protect yourself and your family is to use an Environmental Protection Agency-registered repellent containing DEET or Picaridin (following manufacturer's directions). Use of repellent is especially important between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active and most likely to bite.

Additional precautions include:

- Wearing a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and socks when heading outside.
- Treating clothing with repellent.
- Making sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens and repair those with tears or openings.
- Emptying water once a week from mosquito breeding sites like bird baths, buckets, unused wading pools, and old tires.

Additional information can be found at cdc.gov/west-nile and cdc.gov/easternequineencephalitis.

Daily News

Friday, August 12, 2022

Breastfeeding is a true super power

Submitted by the Mid-Michigan District Health Department

The evidence is clear: Breastfeeding makes children and their mothers healthier and stronger.

It boosts a baby's immune system, providing protection from illness and infection. It guards against childhood obesity and diabetes. It gives breast-fed babies a solid foundation for life-long health and wellness. It reduces a woman's chance of breast and ovarian cancer and protects against post-partum depression. Pediatricians, healthcare experts, and millions of mothers all agree: Breastfeeding is a true super power.

Women have the amazing ability to give their baby the very best start in life by breastfeeding, and in a perfect world, all mothers and babies would reap the benefits of breastfeeding. But breastfeeding isn't always easy and sometimes a struggling mom needs a little help to be successful.

Moms with breastfeeding challenges don't have to go it alone. Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) and its Breastfeeding Peer Counselors are committed to reducing infant mortality and increasing the health of mothers and babies. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program, which is offered to mothers enrolled in Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offers support and encouragement to moms about to deliver, to those who have just delivered, and to those going back to work, as well as education to pregnant women and mothers as their baby grows.

Educating families before babies are born and providing consistent, accessible support through the first year of life and beyond are keys to helping moms reach their breastfeeding goals.

Mothers enrolled in WIC and interested in receiving breastfeeding assistance can contact one of the health department's Breastfeeding Peer Counselors at (989) 875-1073.