

Contact Information:

Mid-Michigan District Health Department
Brady Guilbault
(616) 788-3008
bguilbault@mmdhd.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 7/26/2023

Public Health Advisory: Harmful Algal Bloom Confirmed at Hubscher Park in Gratiot County

Gratiot County, MI – During routine beach monitoring at Paul Hubscher Park in Sumner, it was noted and confirmed by The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) that an algal bloom had formed and tested positive for algal toxin microcystin.

MMDHD is recommending people and pets visiting the park avoid areas of the lake where the algal bloom is present, until the bloom dissipates.

Algae are naturally occurring plant-like organisms found in water. When conditions are right (during periods of warm temperatures, lots of sun, and high nutrient content), these organisms can increase rapidly to form an algal bloom. Blooms can take on many appearances. They can be different colors, can look foamy or scummy, look like a mat on the surface of the water, look like spilled paint, have a green sheen to it, or even look clumpy. Most blooms are harmless, but some produce toxins, which can be poisonous to humans, animals, and aquatic life. It's difficult to tell by looking at a bloom if it is harmful or not, so when in doubt, keep yourself and animals out of the water. To see examples of what an algal bloom looks like, visit:

<https://www.mmdhd.org/recreational-water/> and click on "Harmful Algal Bloom Picture Guide."

Actions to take where an algal bloom is present include:

- Obey posted public health advisory signs and/or beach closings.
- Do not let people, pets, or livestock near the shore or in the water in affected areas.
- Do not let people, pets or livestock drink the water.
- Do not let people, pets, or livestock eat scum on the shore.
- Rinse off people and pets with fresh water after contact with the water.

Breathing in or swallowing water containing harmful algal blooms and their toxins may cause the following symptoms in people: diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, headache, weakness, numbness, tingly fingers, dizziness, difficulty breathing, asthma-like symptoms, runny eyes and nose, allergic reactions, sore throat, headache, and allergic reactions. Skin contact can cause rashes, blisters, or hives. If you or a loved one experiences any of these symptoms after contact with water that may have a harmful algal bloom, call your doctor right away.

Animals, especially dogs, can become ill or die after contact with a harmful algal bloom. Signs of illness include vomiting, diarrhea, staggered walking, and convulsions. If your pet or livestock

animal becomes sick after contact with water that may have a harmful algal bloom, contact your veterinarian right away.

If you think you may have found an algal bloom, you can report it to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) by emailing AlgaeBloom@michigan.gov (pictures are encouraged) or by calling 800-662-9278.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/habs.

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The Mid-Michigan District Health Department has proudly served the residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm Counties since 1966. We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.

Coalition Offers Support, Programs During National Breastfeeding Month

By Admin - July 26, 2023



By William Meiners
Herald Staff Writer

In less than a year's time, the Gratiot County Breastfeeding Coalition (GCBC), established through Child Advocacy, has made strides in bringing focus to a subject that deserves attention. During National Breastfeeding Month, in August, the group wants to spread a message of support even further.

Amanda Siddall, who first came to Child Advocacy as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA volunteer, suggested to Audra Stahl, then the nonprofit's CEO, the critical need for such a coalition. The GCBC was launched in September 2022 with Siddall as its coordinator.

Siddall, who has advanced degrees in nursing and is a certified lactation counselor, told The Herald that even with her professional background, she learned firsthand about the lack of local breastfeeding support after having her daughter. She hoped a coalition might, among other things, improve communications between hospitals, health departments, and the young families in need of support.

"Our main mission was to find a way to get the resources to the families that need it and to improve the resources that we do have," Siddall said.

To that end, Siddall detailed some of their first-year accomplishments in a recent newsletter. "The coalition meets once a month to share updates on lactation resources and trainings, identify barriers, discuss a relevant educational topic, and plan community events," she wrote. "Meetings are open to anyone who wishes to learn more about how to improve breastfeeding support in our community, and are regularly attended by staff from Child Advocacy, Mid-Michigan District Health Department, MyMichigan Health, Gratiot Integrated Health Network, local doulas, community lactation supporters, and parents."

Siddall hopes the coalition, for starters, can help better educate new mothers and the support of breastfeeding mothers in the workplace. She shared a recommendation from the World Health Organization "that all infants be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, with

breastfeeding continuing up to two years of life, as long as mutually desired by both mom and baby.” A “Breastfeeding Report Card” from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that “as of 2022, only 42.6 percent of infants in Michigan are exclusively breastfed through three months, and at six months only 25.1 percent.”

One of the long-term goals of the GCBC is for “all working mothers in our community to have appropriate and comfortable pumping spaces provided by their employers,” Siddall said.

In fact, Siddall noted, federal laws require employers provide “a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.”

The law also requires employers to provide “reasonable break time for employees to pump” for up to a year after giving birth to a child, Siddall reported.

August events

Throughout National Breastfeeding Month, the GCBC is offering several events, including the following.

Child Advocacy Lunch and Learn: August 3, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Child Advocacy. Shannon McKenny Schubert, executive director of Michigan’s Breastfeeding Network, will discuss the importance of community support.

Breastfeeding Awareness Walk: August 5, 9 a.m. to noon, Wright Park. Informational booths and stroller decorations available at 9 for the walk to Alma downtown that begins at 10.

Michigan Virtual Breastmilk Support Group: August 2 and 16, 10 to 11 a.m. on Google Meets. Gratiot, Midland, Saginaw, and Bay County Breastfeeding Coalitions host a collaborative virtual support group on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Available to any current or expecting parent planning to use human milk. Join via MI Breastmilk Circle Google Calendar.

Gratiot County Substance Abuse Coalition Monthly Meeting: August 14, 1 p.m. at Child Advocacy. Nancy Renn-Bugai, from Spectrum Health’s Maternal Fetal Medicine program, will present on substance use during pregnancy and postpartum, newborn withdrawal syndrome, and when breastfeeding is recommended for newborns exposed to substances during pregnancy.

Gratiot County Breastfeeding Coalition Monthly Meeting: August 23, 4:30 p.m. at Child Advocacy and via Zoom. The coalition meets monthly to share updates about lactation resources, training and events, and have a focused educational discussion.

Infant Massage Workshop: August 31, 2 to 4 p.m. at Child Advocacy. Licensed massage therapists Heather Becker and Kat Zettel, from ZENlightenment Wellness Center, will educate caregivers on the infant massage. Infant massage may improve digestion, the ability to feed effectively, increase attachment and bonding, and decrease stress and tension. Registration required.

If you have additional questions about the GCBC or are interested in more information on any of the events in August, please email amanda@childadvocacy.net. The GCBC also has its own website and Facebook page with additional resources and support: www.gcbreastfeedingcoalition.com.

Admin

<http://www.gcherald.com>

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“Gratiot County’s Largest Circulation Newspaper”

123 North Main Street, Ithaca, Michigan 48847

Mailing Address: PO Box 10, Ithaca, Michigan 48847

Voice 989 875 4151

Hours: Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Friday 9a.m. to 12 p.m.

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By The Daily News Staff on August 10, 2023



The Mid-Michigan District Health Department is proud to recognize Linda Gronda and Alex Fisher as recipients of our ACE Award. Gronda is an executive public health representative, and Fisher is a breastfeeding peer counselor with the health department. The ACE (Achievement, Character, Excellence) Award is given to employees who have gone above and beyond what is expected and demonstrated achievement, character and excellence in their work. – Submitted photo

Health Department Confirms Harmful Algal Bloom at Hubscher County Park

By Admin - August 9, 2023



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MMDHD is recommending people and pets visiting the park avoid areas of the lake where the algal bloom is present, until the bloom dissipates. Warning signage has been posted in the impacted area. Further inquiry by The Herald to MMDHD to learn more about the harmful bloom went unreturned by Herald presstime on Tuesday.

According to Michigan.gov, blooms can last days or months. They can also dissipate only to reappear weeks later.

Algae are naturally occurring plant-like organisms found in water. When conditions are right (during periods of warm temperatures, lots of sun, and high nutrient content), these organisms can increase rapidly to form an algal bloom.

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