

DAILY NEWS

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Whooping cough cases increasing

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By The Daily News Staff

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[Submitted by the Mid-Michigan District Health Department](#)

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Cases of pertussis (“whooping cough”) have increased across the U.S. this year, returning to trends seen before 2020. The Mid-Michigan District Health Department has seen these same increases and many of the affected are school-aged children.

We ask that school administrators make staff, volunteers, coaches and parents aware of the increases in pertussis. The best way to prevent pertussis is vaccination.

The vaccines work well but the protection fades over time, and it is important to stay up to date. Children get 4 DTaP before age 2 and get a 5th DTaP dose before kindergarten. Everyone 11 years and older should have at least one Tdap booster. Additional Tdap vaccines are given during pregnancy and sometimes as a tetanus booster.

It is also important to know the signs of pertussis and how it differs from other coughs and colds. Pertussis starts with cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose and sore throat. After 7 to 10 days it turns into a cough that gradually worsens and lasts 6 to 12 weeks or more.

Characteristics of pertussis, and reasons to encourage evaluation by a healthcare provider are the following: Uncontrollable fits of coughing; a cough followed by gagging, vomiting, passing out, or a whooping sound when breathing in, or; anyone with a cough that gets no better after 10 days with no other known cause.

As pertussis is very contagious, anyone that develops a cough and was a close contact to someone with pertussis should be encouraged to be evaluated by a healthcare provider.

Because pertussis is caused by a bacterial infection, it can be treated with antibiotics, though the cough may still last for several weeks. Infants are most vulnerable and are most likely to contract the illness from older siblings, parents, and caregivers. Children under 1 year of age who contract whooping cough are at increased risk of developing pneumonia, being hospitalized and dying of complications.

Pertussis circulates all year, but other illnesses are more common during fall and winter. One of these is norovirus, a very contagious and common cause of the “stomach flu.” Norovirus is very hardy and able to resist hand sanitizer and many common cleaning products. Other illnesses common over the coming months include strep throat, influenza, RSV, COVID and other viruses that cause upper respiratory infections.

Like pertussis, the best way to prevent influenza and COVID is with vaccination. The spread of all illnesses can be reduced with a combination of the following everyday actions.

Everyday actions to prevent and control the spread of infections

Hand washing is one of the most important measures to prevent all illnesses. If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used; however, this will not reliably work for norovirus.

People should be reminded to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throwing the used tissue in the trash after use. If a tissue is not available, sneeze into the elbow, not the hands. Wash hands immediately after blowing the nose, coughing or sneezing.

As mentioned above, vaccinations are the most effective prevention for the infections they are aimed against.

When there is illness in schools, it is required that schools and childcare centers report any of the serious communicable diseases listed by the state of Michigan and any unusual occurrence or outbreak among those in attendance caused by any disease, infection, or condition within 24 hours. Aggregate counts of influenza-like illness may be reported once a week.

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There is no state law mandating closure of school because of illness. The decision is left to the school, with the health department available to provide guidance as needed. Most schools choose to close if the spread of disease cannot be controlled without closing or if the level of absenteeism is hindering overall education. All school-related activities, such as sporting events, should also be canceled. The number of days needed to close depends on the illness involved.

If the main illness is influenza, school should be closed for a minimum of four calendar days (which may include a weekend) and any students that develop influenza-like symptoms should be advised to stay home.

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Immediate Release: October 16, 2024

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detected in Clinton County Dairy Herd

Today, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Director Tim Boring announced the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a dairy herd from Clinton County, bringing the total number of affected dairy herds in Michigan to 30. Testing through the Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory initially detected this case. Samples have been sent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories for additional confirmatory testing.

Regardless of the species, biosecurity remains the best tool available to combat HPAI. On May 1, 2024, Director Boring issued the [Determination of Extraordinary Emergency HPAI Risk Reduction and Response Order](#) (HRRRO). In addition to other protocols, the order requires all dairy operations in Michigan to adopt enhanced biosecurity measures, collectively reducing the risk of introducing this virus on to farms. The order also prohibits the exhibition of all lactating dairy cattle, and those in the last two months of pregnancy, until there are no new cases of HPAI in Michigan dairy cattle for at least 60 consecutive days. No dairy cattle of any age from an infected premises may be exhibited until further notice.

In addition to these requirements, following [a few key steps](#) can also be fundamental to protecting the health and vitality of Michigan's dairy cattle:

- Delay or stop incoming or returning animals from herds with unknown or suspect health status.
- Isolate all animals that are new or returning to your farm.
- Monitor the health of your animals daily.
- Contact your veterinarian if there are ever any animal health-related concerns or if you would like to develop a [secure food supply plan](#).
- Sick animals should have dedicated equipment and be cared for after tending to healthy animals first.
- Clothing, footwear, and equipment worn/used around sick animals should not be worn/used around other animals until they are [cleaned and disinfected](#). Use an EPA-registered disinfectant effective against avian influenza.
- Do not share tools, equipment, trailers, etc. with other farms.
- Clean and disinfect the interiors of trailers used to haul animals from other operations.

- Limit non-essential visitors to your farm.
- If individuals have recently been on a poultry farm, they should not visit a dairy operation, and vice versa.
- Require or provide clean clothing and footwear to those entering your farm.
- Use hand-washing stations and provide gloves to those working on your farm.

As part of the disease response, MDARD is working with the herd veterinarian to monitor the health of the animals and conduct trace investigations. Additionally, MDARD and various federal and state partners continue to offer personal protective equipment at the request of dairy operations. The department continues to diligently work with local, state, and federal partners to quickly respond to reports of HPAI to mitigate the spread of the disease and provide outreach.

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