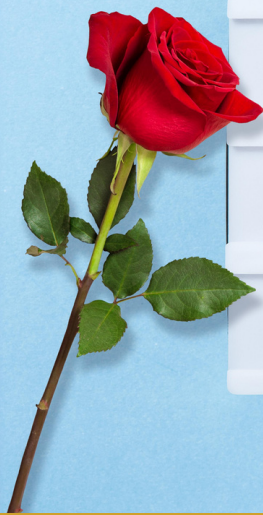


APRIL 2024

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH NEWSLETTER

The Bi-Annual Newsletter for Calhoun County Environmental Public Health



THANK
YOU
NURSES

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Vector Program

Algal Blooms

Be Food Smart This Summer!

*Drinking Water Well
Maintenance*

Septic System Maintenance

Heat Safety



NURSES WEEK MAY 6TH-12TH

Thank you to our Communicable Disease Nurses!



Laura, MPH, RN

"I learned about public health in college and became fascinated with the field; in 1992, at the Cook County Department of Public Health (suburban Chicago) I did an internship in health education and epidemiology, where I audited immunization charts to gather data to determine immunization rates at their clinic sites so they could determine where to focus vaccine efforts. Measles vaccination coverage rates were very low in certain parts of the county. I assisted at vaccine clinics in these areas and loved interacting with the public and providing education."



Kristie, RN

"I liked the idea of being able to make an impact in Calhoun County by preventing the spread of disease in hopes of promoting health in our community. In the hospital, I was helping to care for individuals who were currently ill, which I very much enjoyed. But, in public health, my actions have an emphasis on the prevention side of healthcare, and if I can have an impact on preventing someone from becoming ill, I feel like I'm making a difference."



Heather, RN, BSN

"There are many success stories within our Lead Case Management Program. In 2023, there were 16 children with elevated blood lead levels that eventually were considered "below the threshold of lead poisoning" after completing lead home visits with the families and educating parents on lead risks and prevention. It is a great feeling to know that we helped these children and families with preventing chronic, life-long consequences of lead poisoning."

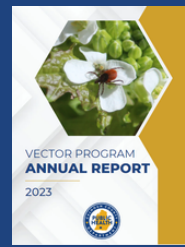
VECTOR PROGRAM

The vector program completed its fifth year in the fall of 2023. During the months that ticks and mosquitoes are most active, staff are out trapping and identifying the species and life-stage to gather data on their populations and any potential health risks they may pose to the community.

Identified target-species of ticks and mosquitoes get sent for disease testing. Tick results are expected to be returned in the fall of 2024. None of the mosquitoes sent for testing in 2023 tested positive for vector-borne disease.

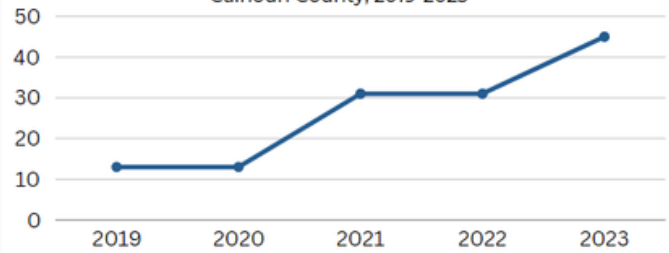
Looking ahead, the vector program plans to further expand its research efforts, collaborate with other agencies, and explore innovative techniques to enhance surveillance and control strategies.

For more information about the program and to see a recap of the 2023 program, check out the Vector Program Annual Report, [here!](#)



The Vector Program Annual Report is Available!

Confirmed and Probable Lyme Disease Cases in Calhoun County, 2019-2023



The graph above shows the number of confirmed and probable Lyme Disease cases seen in Calhoun County over the last 5 years. Calhoun County has seen a 331% increase in Lyme Disease cases since 2019.

ALGAL BLOOMS

Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, are a natural part of lakes, rivers, and ponds. Some cyanobacteria can produce toxins, and when conditions are right, can rapidly increase to produce cyanobacterial blooms - or Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). These blooms can last a few days to weeks and when they contain cyanotoxins can be harmful to people and pets. HABs typically occur in Michigan during the summer months and into the fall. It's not possible to determine whether algal blooms contain harmful toxins by looking at them which is why reporting suspicious algal blooms is important. If you notice suspicious looking algae, avoid contact with the water and report it to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Watch for any posted signage or warnings near shorelines when you head to swimming and boating spots this summer.

For more information about Harmful Algal Blooms or how to report suspicious looking algae, visit EGLE's webpage [here](#).

Always report suspicious looking algae to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) by calling the Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278 or emailing AlgaeBloom@Michigan.gov.



Make Sure Foods Are Cooked to Proper Internal Temperatures

Ground beef: 160°F

Steaks: 145°F

Chicken: 165°F

Fin fish: 145°F

Ham (fresh): 160°F

Ham (pre-cooked): 140°F

Leftovers and casseroles: 165°F

BE FOOD SMART THIS SUMMER!

Prevent food poisoning from spoiling the party by following a few simple food smart guidelines when eating outdoors:

- Keep cold foods cold at 40°F or below by holding food in a cooler with ice packs.
- Limit the number of times the cooler is opened to keep contents cold longer.
- Be sure to keep raw meats, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped and, if possible, consider packing raw and perishable foods in a separate cooler than beverages.
- Cook food thoroughly and use a food thermometer to ensure food is cooked to the proper internal temperature.
- Don't let food sit out for longer than 2 hours, or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90°F. Discard foods that have been sitting out after these times.

For more food smart tips and eating outdoors, visit the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) webpage [here](#).



DRINKING WATER WELL MAINTENANCE

If your home is served by a drinking water well, maintaining your well and the surrounding areas is important for protecting your drinking water and your health. You can take a few small steps to check and maintain your well:

- Check your wellhead and well cap several times per year for cracks or openings that shouldn't be there. The cap keeps rainwater, insects, and small animals from getting into your well.
- Look around your well and make sure not to plant shrubs or trees or store and use harmful chemicals, such as fertilizer, pesticides, or motor oil near the well.
- Make sure you can easily get to your wellhead for maintenance and never build a deck or porch over a wellhead. Buildings should be at least 3 feet from the wellhead.

For more information about well maintenance, visit the Michigan Department for Health and Human Services webpage [here](#).

Contact the Environmental Health front desk to inquire about well inspections and drinking water testing.

Water Testing

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends testing:

- annually for coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrates, and nitrites;
- every 3-5 years for arsenic, copper, and lead.

Contact the Environmental Health front desk during business hours to learn about submitting water samples and pricing. For an additional fee, CCPHD staff can come to your house to take samples.

Did you know?

It's recommended to have your septic tank pumped out by a licensed operator every three to five years. Routinely pumping your tank can prevent your septic system from premature failure, which can lead to groundwater contamination.



BE SEPTICSMART!

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) SepticSmart program is a nationwide initiative to share information about proper care and maintenance of septic systems. Online resources are available for homeowners about how to properly care for your septic system, how simple maintenance of your system can save you money, and the importance of maintaining your septic system to protect your family's health and the environment.

For more information about the EPA's SepticSmart initiative, visit the webpage [here](#).

NOT OK DOWN THE DRAIN

The following cannot go down the drain as they can clog pipes and/or damage septic systems.



FOOD WASTE
Limit food waste by disposing of any excess waste



CHEMICALS
Avoid pouring harsh chemicals down the drain



GREASE/FAT
Dispose of excess grease in a receptacle or container



GARBAGE DISPOSAL
Properly dispose of food debris and limit using a garbage disposal

Limit what you pour down the drain.

Remember, anything other than water can impact your septic system.

HEAT SAFETY

Summers in Michigan can bring hot days that reach 90 degrees or higher. During times of extreme heat, your body works extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. Take steps to prepare for heat ahead of time and what to do during periods of high heat.

Prepare for extreme heat:

- Identify places in your community where you can go to get cool such as libraries and shopping malls.
- Cover windows with drapes or shades and weather-strip doors and windows.
- Install window air conditioners and insulate around them.

Be safe during periods of high heat:

- Never leave people or pets in a closed car.
- Take cool showers and wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Watch for signs of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.
- Consider pet safety. If they are outside, make sure they have plenty of cool water and access to comfortable shade. Asphalt and dark pavement can be very hot on your pet's feet.

For more information about heat safety and how you can prepare, visit the Ready.gov webpage [here](#).

Cooling stations may be open on days of extreme heat during the summer. Contact the Environmental Public Health front desk for locations on days where the temperature reaches over 90 degrees.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Erin: CCPHD's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator!

Erin has been an integral part of the CCPHD team for over a decade, serving as a health educator in several programs before becoming the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator in 2016. Throughout her time at CCPHD, Erin has been involved in a variety of responses, from Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) to Hepatitis A and most recently, COVID-19. However, the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be the most intriguing experience she's had while working here. Being involved in multiple aspects of the response gave Erin a deeper understanding of public health.



Erin has a passion for collaborative planning behind the scenes to ensure that the community is equipped to handle public health threats. Bioterrorism threat events are particularly fascinating to her, as they are constantly evolving. She wishes more people would acknowledge the importance of emergency preparedness and the value of planning, training, and exercising. When these steps are taken, it sets the stage for successful and effective responses during real events. Erin encourages everyone to familiarize themselves with their community partners before they are needed, as this collaborative effort will make recovery much easier!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Certified Food Manager Classes

Classes are scheduled for the following dates:

April 16th

May 21st

June 18th

July 16th

Call the Environmental Public Health Department to reserve a spot in the class or inquire about future class dates.



CALHOUN COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

190 E. Michigan Ave.
Battle Creek, Michigan 49014

115 Market Place
Albion, Michigan 49224

Phone: 269-969-6341

calhouncountymi.gov

facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment

*"Working to enhance our
community's total well-being"*