



# Allegan County Public Health Newsletter

Public Health Updates

Volume I, Issue I  
March 2013

## Unwanted Medication Disposal



Allegan County has recognized the negative impact that unwanted medications have upon our environment, health and community. The County Recycling program has arranged for a permanent drop off at the following law enforcement offices:

- Allegan County Sheriff's Department
- Douglas City Police Department
- Plainwell City Police Department
- Wayland City Police Department

This service is for **unwanted over the counter or prescription medications that are in pill form.**

Call drop off sites for hours of operation.

**Ask Dr. T! Our Medical Director Dr. Tooker has a blog that allows you to directly ask him questions. You can access his blog from our webpage [www.allegancounty.org/health](http://www.allegancounty.org/health)**



### FOOD SERVICE SAFETY

The Allegan County Health Department has the responsibility to ensure the food service establishments, restaurants, in their jurisdiction meet the minimum requirements of the Michigan Food Law and the FDA Food Code. This is done by hiring qualified trained professionals to conduct evaluations at least annually. At present Allegan County has:

- 233 establishments that are open all year
- 100 seasonal establishment operating for less than 9 months ranging from large restaurants to ice cream parlors
- 55 Schools
- 38 Special Transitory Food Units
- 55 Vending machine locations with multiple machines

We also conduct evaluations for temporary food establishments, especially during the summer months. Other areas we provide services in are change of ownership evaluations to ensure that an establishment meets the needs of the new operation, plan review for new or extensively remodeled establishments, and trainings for certified professional food managers. We also investigate food borne illness outbreaks and other complaints about food service establishments. Visit our webpage [www.allegancounty.org/health](http://www.allegancounty.org/health) or call 269-673-5411 for more info.

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### Special points of interest:

- Have you had your house checked for radon? The health department has radon kits available for 15 dollars. Call 269-673-5411 for more information.
- Did you know that Allegan County has a facebook page that is updated at least weekly with public health issues specific to Allegan County?





As the weather gets warmer there is a chance that a bat might get into your home. Do you know what you need to do?

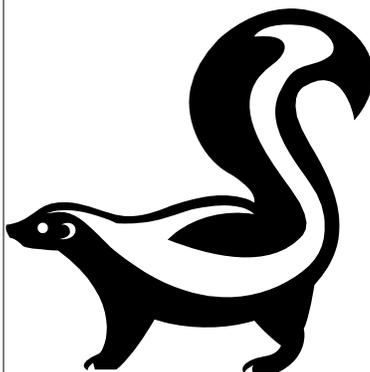
### Positive Rabies in Michigan for 2012

**Bats = 52**

**Skunks = 8**

**Foxes= 1**

**Total= 61**



## Rabies in Allegan County?

### Rabies Prevention

#### **Are bats more likely to have rabies than other mammals?**

Until 1960, dogs were the most important animal host of rabies in the United States. After the institution of mandatory rabies vaccinations for dogs, wildlife species became the most frequently infected animals with rabies. In 2008, 93% of the reported cases of rabies were in wildlife. While raccoons continue to be the most frequently reported rabid wildlife species in the United States (34.9% of all animal cases in 2008), bats made up 26.4% of animal cases in 2008, followed by skunks (23.2%) and foxes (6.6%).

Bats are the animal most often found to be rabid in Michigan. Rabies has been detected in bats throughout the state. In general, the rate of rabies in the general populations of bats is thought to be less than 1%. An average of 6% of the bats tested at the Michigan Department of Community Health's Bureau of Laboratories are positive for rabies. The reason for the difference is the bats that get submitted for testing are more likely to be sick bats that are behaving abnormally and are therefore found inside the home or are caught by pets.

In many of the human rabies cases caused by a bat-strain of the virus, there was no known history of a bite from a bat. For that reason, bats represent a special concern. Bats have very small teeth, and a bite from a bat may not be felt. **Any direct contact with a bat represents a potential exposure to rabies. Other situations that might qualify as exposures include finding a bat in the same room as a person who may not be aware that contact has occurred, such as finding a bat in the room with a sleeping person, a child, or someone who is mentally disabled or intoxicated.** If you think you may have been exposed to rabies from a bat, please **DO NOT LET THE BAT GO**. In these instances, you should [safely collect the bat](#) until the need for rabies testing has been evaluated. Wearing leather gloves, place a coffee can or box over the bat, then use a piece of cardboard with holes punched in it to slide under the can or box, taping this cover firmly to the container.

Contact [Allegan County Health Department](#) @ 269-673-5411 or Allegan County [Animal Control](#) to discuss the need for testing.

#### **What should I do if I think I may have been exposed to rabies?**

It is important to first thoroughly cleanse any wound caused by an animal with soap and water. Next, you should immediately seek medical attention. Appropriate wound care, including antibiotics, and the need for a tetanus booster will be determined by your health care provider. Animal bites must be reported to local health authorities for appropriate follow-up and determination of the need for PEP. If possible, the animal should be safely confined or collected until the need for rabies testing has been determined. Determining that an animal is negative for rabies infection can make PEP treatment unnecessary.



*Pledge to Lose 10% of your body weight. Free starter kit as well as texts and emails to keep you motivated.*



**Start Your Healthier Tomorrow Today!**  
**Richard M Tooker MD, MPH**  
**Medical Director**

Michigan has launched the MI Healthier Tomorrow Campaign to help you finally succeed in achieving better health.

This easy to follow plan is the action stage of the Michigan 4x4 plan. The 4x4 encourages all Michigan residents to know 4 key health measures – your **body mass index (BMI)**, **blood pressure**, **cholesterol level**, and **blood sugar**.

To stay or get healthier the 4x4 plan calls for 4 key healthy behaviors – **maintain a healthy diet**, **engage in regular exercise**, **get an annual physical examination** and **avoid all tobacco use**.

Now Michigan makes it easy to take action and get moving. MI Healthier Tomorrow provides us all with tools and plans for **loosing 10% of our body weight**. Medical studies have proven that **loosing just 10% of your excess weight** can produce very big improvements in physical and mental health!

Take the pledge and get a free help kit at;

[www.michigan.gov/mihealthiertomorrow](http://www.michigan.gov/mihealthiertomorrow) or

[www.facebook.com/mihealthiertomorrow](http://www.facebook.com/mihealthiertomorrow)

**You can join me on my journey to loose 10%!**

**Will your child or grandchild be starting Kindergarten later this year?**

You may wonder whether your young child who is ready to enter school in September will need any vaccines.

Typically, children who are 4-6 years of age receive additional doses of DTaP, IPV, MMR, and Varicella vaccine.

If you are feeling comfortable that this is an important and necessary thing to do, your child will also be more comfortable.

Be honest with your child, explaining that it may hurt a bit, but it will not be for long. Also explain that the vaccine will keep him or her healthy.

It is better to call your child's doctor or call the health department in the Spring rather than wait until August to try to get an appointment for immunizations.

Making sure that children of all ages receive all their vaccinations on time is one of the most important things parents can do to ensure their children's long-term health — as well as the health of friends, classmates, and others in the community.

Additional information can be found at this website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html>

**[Get when to stay home info @ http://www.allegancounty.org/docs/HD/PH/HDPH\\_Brochure\\_When-to-stay-home.pdf](http://www.allegancounty.org/docs/HD/PH/HDPH_Brochure_When-to-stay-home.pdf)**

### **Respiratory Versus GI Flu! What's the difference?**

#### **Know the difference between Influenza and Gastroenteritis**

When someone experiences symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea it's often referred to as the "stomach flu". This can be a misleading and confusing term to many people. More appropriately called "gastroenteritis", this illness can be caused by a number of viruses and bacteria such as norovirus, salmonella, e. coli, etc.

- These types of infections are spread by the fecal-oral route, meaning that the bacteria or virus is found in the stool and is spread when someone introduces the virus or bacteria into their body by touching their eyes, nose or mouth after having contact with contaminated items or by eating contaminated food.
- Contaminated items often include surfaces such as doorknobs or countertops and sometimes water.
- Symptoms usually last from a few days up to a week and will usually resolve on their own.
- Hand washing, especially after going to the bathroom and before eating, is one of the most effective ways to prevent gastroenteritis.
- If you become ill it's extremely important to stay home until after symptoms are gone.

Influenza (flu) is an illness that causes cough, congestion, muscle and body aches and fatigue.

- Influenza is spread by breathing in respiratory secretions from the air that an infected person has released while coughing or sneezing.
- Unlike gastroenteritis, influenza can result in serious health related complications, like pneumonia, and causes thousands of hospitalizations and deaths each year.
- The single best defense we have against influenza is the influenza vaccine which is needed ever year.
- In addition to the vaccine, covering coughs and sneezes by using a tissue or coughing or sneezing into the inside of your elbow will decrease the number of people exposed to the virus in the air.
- Hand washing, especially after coughing or sneezing is another important step to prevent the spread of influenza.

So remember that GI illness is not the flu! It is gastroenteritis. Remember proper hand washing can prevent not just gastroenteritis and influenza but many other illnesses.



*To properly wash your hands you should get your hands wet and lather with soap for at least 20 seconds which is about the same amount of time as singing the "Happy Birthday" song.*



Find Us On  **facebook**

**Find us on facebook ...Like us to get public health updates about Allegan County.**