

AT YOUR SERVICE

NEWS FROM THE VAN BUREN/CASS DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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SARS –SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO) is rapidly investigating the new disease called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The disease was first reported among people in China. It has since spread to other countries including the United States. As of April 20, the United States has reported 190 probable and 38 suspected cases of SARS, of which none have died. In Michigan there have been no probable and 3 suspect cases. Worldwide, there have been over 3900 cases including over 225 deaths.

The symptoms of SARS begins with a fever greater than 100.4 degrees. Other symptoms include headache, and overall feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people experience mild respiratory symptoms. After 2 to 7 days, SARS patients may develop a dry cough and have trouble breathing. Individuals with these symptoms who have recently returned from travel to mainland China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore or Toronto should see a health care provider and inform them of their travel history.

SARS is caused by a newly discovered virus in the coronavirus family. This family of viruses also includes viruses which cause the common cold. The transmission of SARS appears to occur predominantly by direct contact with infectious material, which makes touching contaminated objects a potential concern. It is also possible for SARS to be spread through the airborne route. SARS is highly contagious and has been spread to health care workers, close personal contacts, and outside of the United States there has been spread in the schools and in the community. See the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov> for more about SARS; updates are rapidly breaking.

WEST NILE VIRUS

As spring is trying to replace winter, mosquitoes and the diseases they spread become a legitimate concern. The mosquito borne West Nile Virus (WNV) is causing a lot of discussion throughout the state and the nation. This virus can in rare cases cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord). While the chance of anyone becoming infected with the West Nile Virus is low, most cases have occurred in people older than 50.

Some species of birds are very susceptible to this disease. Crows and Blue Jays seem to experience high mortality rates when infected. There is no evidence that WNV can be spread directly from birds to people. If you wish to report the sighting of dead birds, please call the State of Michigan West Nile Virus Hot Line (1-888-668-0869).

From April to October, take the following precautions: If outside from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active, or during the day in an area where there are weeds, tall grass or bushes, people should wear protective clothing, such as long pants, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and socks. Consider the use of an insect repellent containing DEET, according to the manufacturer's directions on the label.



2003 "WHAT MAKES ME HEALTHY" ART CONTEST

The 3rd annual "What Makes Me Healthy" Art Contest reception was held in April to celebrate Public Health Month. Winners were honored at a reception on Wednesday, April 16th at the Hartford office of the Van Buren/Cass County District Health Department. Grand Prize Winners were Sarah Darling, 3rd grade, Hartman School; Devan Shugars, 5th grade, Marcellus Middle School. First Prize winners included Keeana Fruge, 3rd grade, Lincoln Elementary School, and Hannah Reuter, 5th grade, Marcellus Middle School. Second Prize winners—Mykela Fruge, 1st grade, Lincoln Elementary School, and Jessica Zolp, 5th grade, Trinity Lutheran School. Third Prize winners—Katie Cox, 2nd grade, Black River Elementary and Nolan Snyder, 5th grade, Trinity Lutheran School. Honorable Mention—Marina Kosher, 1st grade, Woodside Elementary; Katelyn Colvin, 3rd grade, Lincoln Elementary School; Josiah Valk, 4th grade, Trinity Lutheran School; and Caleb Williamson, 5th grade, Marcellus Middle School.



The two grand prize winners artwork is framed and will permanently hang in the lobby of the Hartford Office. The top eight winners received savings bonds totaling \$500 donated by the Chemical-Shoreline Bank. Honorable Mention winners received art kits.

Congratulations to all. Please visit our website soon to see the artwork of our top winners.

SMALLPOX VACCINATION PROGRAM UPDATE

The Michigan smallpox vaccination program continues to develop plans to vaccinate our public health response teams and our health care response teams. There has been no date scheduled to begin vaccinations in the 5th District. The State of Michigan's Department of Community Health continues to work closely with the federal government to resolve issues around compensation for rare injuries related to the smallpox vaccination. There is currently legislation pending regarding this issue. As soon as the legislation passes at the federal level, we will begin implementing the smallpox vaccination program in our region.

Another delay in the vaccination program involves a newly identified contraindication. Careful monitoring of smallpox vaccinations given over recent months has suggested that the vaccine may cause myocarditis (heart inflammation), pericarditis (inflammation of the membrane covering the heart), and/or myopericarditis (a combination of these two problems). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has received reports of heart attacks and other heart conditions among several vaccinees. As a precautionary measure, the CDC has recommended that persons with known cardiac disease or any history of coronary artery disease defer vaccination at this time. The U.S. Public Health Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that individuals with three or more known cardiac risk factors not be vaccinated at least for the time being.

Approximately 375 Michigan volunteers have received the smallpox vaccine under this program. Michigan has had three cases of serious adverse reactions.

APRIL/MAY NATIONAL HEALTH OBSERVANCES

APRIL

Cancer Control Month

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

MAY

Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

National Stroke Awareness Month

UPDATED WEBSITE

Recently the website of the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department has been updated. Visit us as www.vbcassdhd.org. You will find new and important links to topics such as Bioterrorism and Smallpox. You can also find facts sheets on Anthrax, Ricin, Plague, Cyanide, Botulism and nerve agents.

Our website highlights our services such as Dental Care, Substance Abuse Services, Environmental Health, Clinical Services, Emergency Preparedness and appointments. We strive to update the site regularly, so visit it often.

SAFE KIDS SAFETY CAMP

This summer children will be rushed to emergency rooms nearly 3 million times for serious injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes, drowning, bike crashes, pedestrian incidents, falls and other hazards. While parents and children think of summer as a season of fun, emergency room doctors know it as "trauma season." To help kids stay safe and out of our emergency rooms this summer, the Van Buren SAFE KIDS Chapter will host an interactive, free summer safety camp, on Saturday, May 10th, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Van Buren Human Services Parking Lot in Hartford (South of Red Arrow Highway on County Road 681).

Preventable Injuries are the leading killer of children ages 14 and under. More than 2,500 children die each summer due to preventable injuries. These tragedies peak during the summer when children are supervised less, have more free time and engage in more outdoor activities.

The Van Buren SAFE Kids Safety Camp will provide parents, caregivers and children the opportunity to learn about summer safety together, through interactive displays and games. Safety stations will encourage parents and children to ride safe, swim safe, bike safe, be safe in case of fire and safe around the home. *Make it a SAFE KIDS Summer!* For more information call coordinator Emily Diederich at (269) 621-3143, ext 362.

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GET KIDS MOVING!

DID YOU KNOW

- Forty-three percent of adolescents watch more than two hours of television each day.
- Ten percent of preschool children between the ages of 2 and 5 are overweight, up from 7 percent in 1994.
- Risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, occur with increased frequency in overweight children and adolescents compared with children with a healthy weight.

It's time to support and enable children to live a healthy Lifestyle. Visit the American Heart Association website at www.americanheart.org