

Connecting Point

Newsletter



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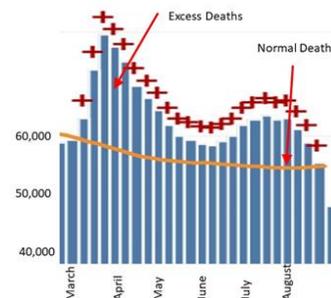
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Visit www.mmdhd.org for
more information on
agency programs, services,
and health issues.

Why we fight COVID-19 - Marcus Cheatham

One of the things I get asked by the public, and by staff members, is whether it is worth it to put so much effort into fighting COVID. People often wonder if it is really *that* bad. In fact, the toll from COVID has been extraordinary. It has been the largest mortality event since the 1918-19 Flu Pandemic. Consider this: In the U.S. there were 1,360,338 deaths from March 28 through August 15, 2020. But only 1,123,837 deaths would have been expected in a normal year. Thus, there were 236,501 more deaths than would have happened normally. That means there was 21% excess mortality during this time, a strong indication that COVID has killed many people directly, or indirectly by restricting access to health care.

COVID is so nasty that even though it picks on older people, it has killed so many people that it has gotten a lot of young folks, too. It has killed twice as many young adults as the 2009 H1N1 pandemic and we are only part way through this thing. Read about it here: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid19/excess_deaths.htm



Family Planning and Women's Health

Breastfeeding can be an important tool that many mothers use to help their child's immune system, to reduce costs of formula, and to bond with their baby. However, many mothers struggle with breastfeeding due to a variety of factors, which can cause them to stop early or become frustrated with the process. Our team at MMDHD is here to support these mothers through our International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) services. Patients can call (989) 763-2384 to set up an appointment with our IBCLC.



MMDHD also provides a variety of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) options and sexual health education for patients. This includes IUDs and arm implants (Nexplanon), although we also offer other types of birth control including condoms, spermicide, emergency contraception, and birth control pills.

MMDHD offers pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, and yearly exams for patients on a sliding scale pay rate to make sexual healthcare more affordable for everyone. Patients can contact our services by calling the office of their choice (Clinton County, Gratiot County, or Montcalm County) and requesting an appointment at the respected phone numbers listed to the left. We also partner with Shiawassee County for family planning needs. You can reach them at (833) 220-3200.

Sharps Disposal Program

Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) has resumed the Sharps Disposal Program. The Environmental Health Unit accepts sharps for disposal by appointment only at our Montcalm and Gratiot branch offices.

Needle-stick injuries are a preventable health risk if individuals take specific actions to protect themselves and others from this risk. The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) encourages individuals to utilize our free Sharps Disposal Program. Sharps users can take their filled sharps containers to our offices for safe disposal. We accept FDA cleared sharp containers and strong plastic containers, such as empty laundry detergent or bleach bottles or other similar containers that are leak resistant and have tight fitting puncture resistant lids. Containers can contain needles, syringes, lancets, autoinjectors or infusion devices and should be filled $\frac{3}{4}$ full with a sealed lid and kept upright.

SHARPS DISPOSAL



Sharps that are improperly disposed by being placed in recycling containers or household trash cans can cause injury or spread infection to people and pets. Residents can safely dispose of both used and unused sharps by taking their medical sharps container to the Environmental Health Division in our branch offices.

For Gratiot Branch Office, call (989) 875-1002
For Montcalm Branch Office, call (989) 831-3603

Flu Season

Flu season is here, and it is more important than ever to push for flu vaccinations to avoid co-infection with COVID-19 and to preserve scarce medical resources. Some settings that usually provide the flu vaccine may not provide it this year due to the current pandemic. The CDC has also noted that distribution times for the flu vaccine may be later than normal, but distribution is ongoing. The website www.vaccinefinder.org can help patients to find where they can get a vaccine.



Halloween Guidance

Halloween is going to look different this year, much like everything else, due to COVID-19. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recently released Halloween guidance in order to make sure that everyone can participate in the holiday and stay safe.

In addition to following the normal COVID-19 guidelines like wearing a mask, social distancing, staying home if sick, and washing your hands frequently, MDHHS and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) also provided more detailed recommendations. This includes participating in one-way trick-or-treating in neighborhoods, only going to houses with safety measures in place, and only trick-or-treating with people that you live with. The CDC also urges homeowners to mark 6-foot lines for trick-or-treaters to socially distance, hand out candy outside, and disinfecting any surface used to distribute candy on regularly.

There are also many alternatives to the traditional trick-or-treating for this year. The MDHHS urges people to participate in the holiday virtually and to limit any Halloween parties to 10 or less people. Neighborhoods can also hold a costume parade for children as an easy way to stay socially distanced and to show off great costumes. No matter what you choose to do this year, make sure to stay safe and have fun!

For more information about these and other Health Department programs, contact:

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