



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Pertussis**
- **Handwashing Tips**
- **Radon Action Month**
- **Inland Beach Monitoring Results**
- **A Note from the Nurse**
- **Plan First!**

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

There has been an increase in pertussis cases throughout the US. Numbers across Michigan have surpassed last year's reports. Between 2017 and 2019, Michigan averaged 596 cases of pertussis each year. The numbers declined during the pandemic but are on the rise. There have already been 1050 confirmed and probable cases reported to MDHHS this year as of November 14, 2024.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is caused by a bacteria that can easily be spread person to person through airborne droplets. An infected person can spread pertussis for up to three weeks after the cough begins if they are not treated with antibiotics. In the early stages of the disease, the person may feel like they have a cold with a running nose, low grade fever and slight cough. After about a week, the cough can start to become violent with coughing fits lasting a minute or longer making it difficult to breathe and can even cause vomiting.

The acute infectious disease can cause serious illness in people of all ages, but is more likely to be severe and possibly deadly for infants.

Vaccinations continue to be the best line of defense against the spread of pertussis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends pertussis vaccine for infants, children, adolescents and people who are pregnant. CDC also recommends a dose of pertussis vaccine for adults who haven't received a dose as an adolescent or adult.



Handwashing Tips to Stay Healthy

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Follow these five steps every time:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or an air dryer.

There is no safe alternative to hand washing, but if soap and water are not readily available, a temporary alternative could be used such as alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

For more information on proper handwashing, visit [cdc.gov/clean-hands/about](https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about).



Radon Action Month

January is Radon Action Month. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the U.S. claiming approximately 20,000 lives annually or slightly more than two every hour. Radon is a radioactive odorless gas produced from the decomposition of uranium. Therefore, it could be lingering in a private home or public building without the occupant being aware of its presence.

Fortunately, scientists have provided a tool that can help protect us from radon, such as a simple test that can determine the approximate level of radon exposure in buildings. If levels are

high, mitigation systems can be installed to lower radon to a safe level.

In observance of "Radon Action Month" the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department (DIDHD) has reduced the cost to \$5 for the short-term test kits for the month of January.

The kits can be purchased at the Iron County office, located at 1374 Commercial Ave, Crystal Falls or in the Dickinson Office, located at 818 Pyle Drive, Kingsford. Our office hours are 8-4pm, Monday-Friday.

Anyone seeking further information regarding the department's Radon Program can call DIDHD at (906) 779-7239.

A Note from the Nurse

Do you know your sexual health status? Have you ever been tested or treated for an STD? Today, the term Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) is used rather than Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD). An infection is treatable but can lead to disease when not treated.

The most common STI in Michigan is Chlamydia, which is caused by a bacteria spread through oral, vaginal or anal sex. At the end of November 2024 there were 29,411 confirmed cases. DIDHD follows up with all cases in Dickinson and Iron Counties to ensure the person and their partner are treated. The testing process is very easy – you simply collect urine in a cup or swab yourself after we ask you a few questions. If you test positive, we can call the medication to your chosen pharmacy, or you can obtain the medication from us. We can also provide treatment for your partner if they are not able to come in or live elsewhere. There is no charge for testing or treatment for those who have no insurance, and all appointments are confidential. To learn your status, contact our office today 906-779-7239 or 906-265-4151.

Celebrating One Year of Plan First!

The Plan First! program has operated for just over a year and during that time has served almost 20,000 Michiganders. Eligible Michiganders can take advantage of in-office visits with providers, access to birth control and other contraceptive products, sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment and other services

The Plan First! family planning program covers a broad range of services, which includes: Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved contraceptive products and natural family planning methods for individuals who want to prevent pregnancy and to space births. It also includes pregnancy testing and counseling, sexually transmitted infection services, some cancer screenings, voluntary sterilization procedures and follow-up care, HIV post-exposure prophylaxis and pre-exposure prophylaxis, vaccines and other preconception health services.

To apply for Plan First! coverage, an individual needs to complete a Medicaid application, which is available on the MI Bridges portal or via a paper form. Plan First! family planning coverage is available to individuals who:

- Are of any age or gender.
- Are not pregnant at the time of application.
- Are a U.S. citizen or a qualified immigrant.
- Are a Michigan resident.
- Are not covered under another Medicaid benefit.
- Meet income eligibility requirements (income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level).



All Plan First! enrollees have free choice of family planning providers and may obtain covered family planning services from any qualified Medicaid-enrolled provider, including Title X family planning clinics, local health departments, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Tribal Health Centers and primary care or obstetrical providers. Individuals who qualify for Plan First can also enroll in coverage on the Health Care Marketplace.

Learn more about Plan First! benefits and services at gov/PlanFirst.



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Mission Statement:

The mission of the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is to assure the highest possible level of health for the people of the communities it serves. To fulfill this mission, the Department works with individuals and organizations to prevent premature death, disability, illness and injury, to prolong life, and to promote the public health through disease prevention and control, health promotion and healthy environments, and through the provision of direct services for particularly vulnerable high risk population groups.



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