

# THE TUSCOLA TRACKER

Tuscola County Health Department

April, May, June 2009



## A Healthier Home

We spend about 90% of our time indoors! We eat, sleep and breathe inside our homes. It makes sense to have a healthy home free of things that can cause health problems or injuries. Here are some suggestions for making your home a safe and healthy place for your family:

**Mold**—Mold smells musty. It grows in wet places, like basements and bathrooms. Here's what you can do to stop mold from growing in your house:

- Fix water leaks in your house right away.
- Make sure the rainwater can drain away from your house. Clean and repair the gutters. Attach extenders to the downspouts. The ground near the house should slope away so the water will drain.
- Use a dehumidifier inside your house to keep the humidity around 50%
- Connect the vent from the dryer to the outside of your house. Moisture from your clothes will go outside instead of back into your house.
- Remove carpet in rooms that are damp like basements and bathrooms. Wash throw rugs at least once a week.
- Do not over-water plants. Cover plant dirt with stones.

**Dust Mites**—live in every home in soft items like mattresses, pillows, carpets, stuffed toys, furniture and curtains. Here's how to get rid of dust mites.

- Get rid of clutter. Dust all of the rooms in your house once a week using a damp cloth.
- Wash your sheets and blankets in hot water once a week. Keep the temperature of your water between 120 and 130 degrees.
- Use dust mite proof mattress and pillow covers to keep from breathing dust mites. Follow the cleaning instructions found on the label.
- Get rid of stuffed toys, or wash them in hot water every week. If a toy cannot be washed, put it in the freezer for a day to kill the dust mites.
- Vacuum or use hot water to clean pillows, rugs and curtains once a week.
- Vacuum at least once a week. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Dust mites like moisture. Keep indoor humidity levels around 50%

**Cockroaches, Mice and Rats**—many people with asthma are allergic to them. Mice and rats can bring disease to people. Get rid of these pests. Don't share your food with them.

- Keep food in hard, closed containers. Wipe up crumbs and wash food off dishes right away.
- Use a trashcan with a lid. Regularly remove the trash from the house.
- Cockroaches, mice and rats need water to live. Make sure there are no water puddles inside the home.

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## Legal Update—Unattended Child in Car

Effective April 1, 2009, Public Act 519 of 2008 added MCL 750.135a to the Michigan Penal Code. The new section makes it a crime for a person responsible for the care or welfare of a child to leave a child under 6 years old in a vehicle for a period of time that poses an “unreasonable” risk of harm or injury to the child.

For the purposes of the new section, a child is unattended if he or she is left alone or without supervision by a person 13 years old or older.

Violations of the new statute are punishable as follows:

- 93-day misdemeanor for child left unattended
- 1-year misdemeanor if the unattended child suffers physical harm
- 15-year felony if the unattended child dies.

The new statute uses the same definitions of “physical harm” and “serious physical harm” as used in the child abuse statute.

It is important to note that for a violation to occur the risk to an unattended child must be unreasonable. While the legislature did not define what is unreasonable, it is clear they did not intend to punish the simple act of leaving a child unattended when no aggravating factors exist.

Officers investigating violations of the new statute should ensure they fully document factors that might affect reasonableness (e.g., interior and exterior temperature, location, length of time, items in the vehicle, whether the vehicle is locked or running).



## Pneumonia Vaccine Recommendations

CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends a single dose of pneumonia vaccine (PPSV23) for all people 65 years and older, and for persons 2 to 64 years of age with certain high-risk conditions: chronic cardiovascular disease, chronic pulmonary disease, diabetes mellitus, alcoholism, chronic liver disease including cirrhosis, cerebrospinal fluid leaks, functional or anatomic asplenia including sickle cell disease and splenectomy, and immunocompromising conditions. Also, all adults age 19 through 64 years of age who smoke cigarettes or have asthma should receive the pneumonia vaccine.

All people who have existing indications for the pneumonia vaccine should continue to be vaccinated according to current ACIP recommendations during the outbreak of novel influenza A (H1N1).

## Communicable Disease Reports

Disease	January-February-March 2008	January-February-March 2009
Campylobacter	1	
Cryptosporidiosis		
Giardiasis		1
Salmonellosis	2	
Pneumonia, Invasive		2
Coccidioidomycosis		
E. Coli		1
Aseptic Meningitis	1	1
Bacterial Meningitis		
Influenza	3	
MRSA	1	
Varicella	1	1
Pertussis		
Hepatitis A		
Hepatitis B, Acute	1	
Hepatitis B, Chronic	1	7
Hepatitis C, Chronic	14	
Hepatitis C, Unknown		
<b>RABIES INVESTIGATIONS</b>	<b>Jan-Feb-March 2008</b>	<b>Jan-Feb-March 2009</b>
Reports received and investigated	6	14
Tested positive for rabies	0	0

## School Reports January-February-March 2009

Bronchitis	2	Flu-like illness	487
Hand, Foot, & Mouth	1	Head Lice	15
Impetigo	1	Mono	1
MRSA	2	Pink Eye	37
Pneumonia	2	Scabies	1
Shingles	3	Strep	73
Varicella	7		

Please note: Diagnosis is not always made by a health care professional.

## A Healthier Home (continued)

- Fix leaks right away.
- Do not leave pet food or water out at night. Keep extra food in sealed containers.
- Use traps or sticky pads to kill them instead of sprays or poisons.



Pets—Some people are allergic to dander (dead skin that is shed), saliva and urine.

- Find a new home for the pet or keep it outside if someone in your family is allergic to animals.
- Don't allow pets on beds or in the bedroom.
- Wash the pet weekly.
- Do not allow children with

asthma or pet allergies to rub their faces in a pet's fur.

- Have children wash their hands after touching pets.

Chemicals—there are chemicals in your home, both natural and man-made. Some chemicals can make you sick or even cause death.

- Carbon monoxide has no odor or color and is toxic. You can't see it, taste it or smell it. It comes from burning fuel like natural gas, wood and kerosene. Your furnace, stove, water heater or fireplace might give it off if they are not working right. Cars produce carbon monoxide when the motor is running. Signs of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to the flu. You may have a headache, nausea, dizziness or feel tired. Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to coma or death.
- Never leave a car running in the garage.
- Do not use kerosene heaters, grills, generators or fuel-powered machines indoors.
- Do not use a gas stove to heat your house.
- Have chimneys, water heaters, gas-burning furnaces or fireplaces checked once a year by a professional.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector. If the alarm goes off, get outside and call the fire department or gas company.
- If you think that you have been poisoned by carbon monoxide, leave the building and call 911 right away.

- Second-hand smoke—it is full of harmful chemicals such as arsenic, cyanide, benzene, formaldehyde, tar, and carbon monoxide. Can cause asthma, asthma attacks, ear and respiratory infections in children, and can cause lung cancer and heart disease.
- Do not smoke, or find ways to quit.
- Smoke outside to keep chemicals out of your home.
- Do not smoke in a car, especially with children present.

Lead—may be in your house if it was built before 1978. Can cause learning difficulties and behavior problems in children, and high blood pressure, digestion problems, reproduction problems, nerve disorders, memory problems, and muscle and joint pain in adults.

- Clean up paint chips. Wet-dust and mop at least once a week to remove lead dust.
- Wash children's hands before they eat and sleep. Keep children from chewing on windows and other painted surfaces.

Mercury—a liquid metal that is used in thermometers and compact fluorescent light bulbs.

- If you have a spill, open the windows and get everyone out of the area. Don't vacuum, sweep, or wipe it up.
- Find out how to clean up properly at [www.michigan.gov/mercury](http://www.michigan.gov/mercury), or by calling 800-648-6942.

Radon gas—has no color or smell, and seeps into basements and crawl spaces. It can cause lung cancer. Radon kits can be purchased at the health department or hardware store for about \$10.



For more information on safety in the home, such as preventing fires, choking, drowning, falls, and firearm injuries, go to [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov).

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT INFORMATION



The Tuscola County Health Department conducts immunization clinics on Monday afternoons, Tuesdays, and Thursdays by appointment. We also offer evening appointments the first and second Tuesday of each month.

We serve all ages, infant through adult. You may schedule an appointment by calling 989-673-8114, ext. 110 or 102.

**Immunization Update:**  
During January, February, and March 2009, 727 children received 1787 vaccinations at the health department.

**Visit our Website**

**[www.tchd.us](http://www.tchd.us)**  
for the latest information on our programs, hours, clinic schedules, etc.

## TUSCOLA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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«AddressBlock»

The Tuscola Tracker is a quarterly newsletter providing local health department reports and information about communicable diseases and community health issues. Our resources include publications by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), such as the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) and other sources. If you'd like more information, or have questions regarding the above topics or other public health issues, please contact Ann Hepfer at 989-673-8114, ext. 117.

## Update on Novel Influenza A H1N1

July 1, 2009

### A Pandemic is declared

On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6 in response to the ongoing global spread of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. This level reflects the spread of the virus not the severity of illness caused by the virus. It's uncertain at this time how serious or severe this novel H1N1 pandemic will be in terms of how many people infected will develop serious complications or die from novel H1N1 infection.

### Tuscola County Reports

The Tuscola County Health Department now reports the county has had two reported cases of the Novel influenza A (H1N1) or "swine flu". The two cases have recovered and were not hospitalized. The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.

### CDC Response

CDC continues to take aggressive action to respond to the outbreak. CDC's response goals are to reduce the spread and severity of illness, and to provide information to help health care providers, public health officials and the public address the challenges posed by this new public health threat. CDC is issuing updated "interim guidance" found at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu> in response to the rapidly evolving situation.

### Clinician Guidance

CDC has issued interim guidance for clinicians on identifying and caring for patients with novel H1N1, in addition to providing interim guidance on the use of antiviral drugs. The priority use for influenza antiviral drugs during this outbreak is to treat people hospitalized with influenza illness, and to treat people at increased risk of severe illness, including pregnant women, young children, and people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes and other metabolic diseases, heart or lung disease, kidney disease, weakened immune systems, and persons with neurologic or neuromuscular disease.

The Tuscola County Health Department is offering oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza) to primary healthcare partners at "no cost" to the patient in treating the novel Influenza H1N1 virus. Arrangements have also been made with the Caro VG's pharmacy to provide liquid Tamiflu at "no cost" to those patients less than 88 pounds. If your clinic is interested in these antiviral drugs contact Sharon at 673-8114 ext. 118 for more information.

### Testing

CDC has developed a PCR diagnostic test kit to detect the novel H1N1 and has now distributed test kits to the Michigan Department of Community Health. Testing is no longer needed since 98% of Influenza-like Illness (ILI) is now novel H1N1 virus. Testing is only being done at sentinel hospitals and providing aggregate reporting.

### Vaccine

Vaccines are a very important part of a response to pandemic influenza and the U.S. Government is aggressively taking early steps in the process to manufacture a novel H1N1 vaccine, working closely with five manu-

facturers. Clinical trials are expected to start July 1, 2009. The Tuscola County Health Department is in the planning stages of how to carry out H1N1 flu clinics this fall.

## Surveillance

Novel influenza A H1N1 activity is now being detected through CDC's routine influenza surveillance systems and reported weekly in Flu View. CDC tracks U.S. influenza through multiple systems across five categories. While our influenza surveillance systems indicate that overall influenza activity is decreasing in the United States, Novel H1N1 outbreaks are ongoing in different parts of the U.S., in some cases with intense influenza-like activity. Most of the influenza viruses being detected now are novel H1N1 viruses.

## Virus Infections among Healthcare Personnel

On June 19, 2009 the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) published a report entitled "Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Infections Among Healthcare Personnel. None of the Healthcare Personnel (HCP) with potential patient-to-provider transmission of pandemic H1N1 influenza reported adhering to all recommended infection control practices for all contacts with possible source patients. Whatever the risk of infection to HCP, this report suggests that much of it exists in the outpatient setting, such as outpatient clinics and emergency rooms. Current CDC infection control recommendations for the care of patients with pandemic N1N1 infections include:

- Administrative actions such as exclusion of ill HCP from work
- The use of fit-tested N-95 respirators
- Eye protection

## Shared Responsibility

Healthcare professionals and individuals have an important role in protecting themselves and their families:

- Stay informed. Health officials will provide information as it becomes available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with influenza stay home for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

For more information regarding the current Novel Influenza A H1N1 you are encouraged to visit [www.tchd.us](http://www.tchd.us) or visit <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu> or [www.michigan.gov/swineflu](http://www.michigan.gov/swineflu) .

