

Cervical Health

This month, we want to remind everyone about the importance of cervical health and encourage people to take steps to prevent cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is a preventable disease when detected early. It primarily arises from persistent infection with high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) types. There are at least 12 high risk strains of HPV, with HPV 16 and HPV 18 accounting for almost 70% of invasive cervical cancers. Anyone with a cervix is at risk for cervical cancer, and it mostly occurs in people over age 30. HPV is common, with over 200 types, and can be passed during sex. At least half of sexually active people will have HPV at some point in their lives, but few will get cervical cancer.

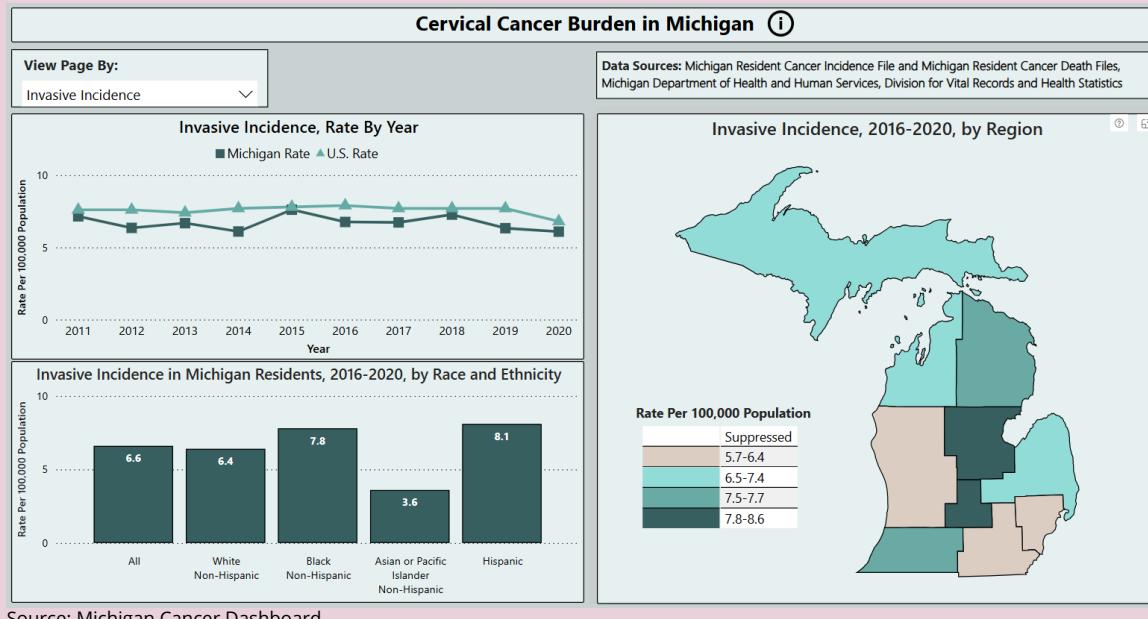
Prevention

The best way to prevent cervical cancer is to get the HPV vaccine, get regular cervical cancer screenings, and treat pre-cancerous lesions.

- Women should begin regular screenings in their early 20s
 - Pap tests start at age 21, and HPV tests start at age 25
 - Pap and HPV co-tests start at age 30
- HPV vaccine protects against the types of HPV that most often cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers
 - Recommended for males and females ages 9-26, with the most effective age to get it being 11-12
- The HPV vaccine has led to a reduction of infections and cervical precancers since 2006, including:
 - an 88% reduction in HPV infections among teen girls & an 81% reduction among young adult women
 - Among vaccinated women, cervical precancers caused by HPV has dropped by 40%
- The HPV vaccine is safe and effective, and protection lasts at least 10 years, with no evidence of decreased protection over time

Grand Traverse County Health Department offers **free to low cost cervical cancer screening services**. For more information, visit [here](#) or call us at 231-995-6113.

Data



In Grand Traverse County, the average age-adjusted incidence rate from 2017-2021 was 8.0 (4.6,13.0) cases per 100,000 population, which is higher than Michigan with 6.6 (6.3,6.9) cases per 100,000 population. Although this rate is higher than the state average, the difference may not be statistically significant due to overlapping 95% confidence intervals. Grand Traverse County also ranks 6th out of 22 counties with available data, placing it in the top third of Michigan counties for cervical cancer incidence from 2017-2021. These findings highlight the importance of continued efforts to enhance access to cervical cancer prevention and screening programs to reduce the overall burden.



Want to know more? Check out this abstract on a study that shows a steep decline in cervical cancer deaths in the first U.S. women eligible for the HPV vaccine.

Also, read about a new mathematical model of HPV transmission and cancer incorporating disproportionate HPV vaccine coverage and 2030 vaccination coverage targets [here](#).



Monthly Epi Report

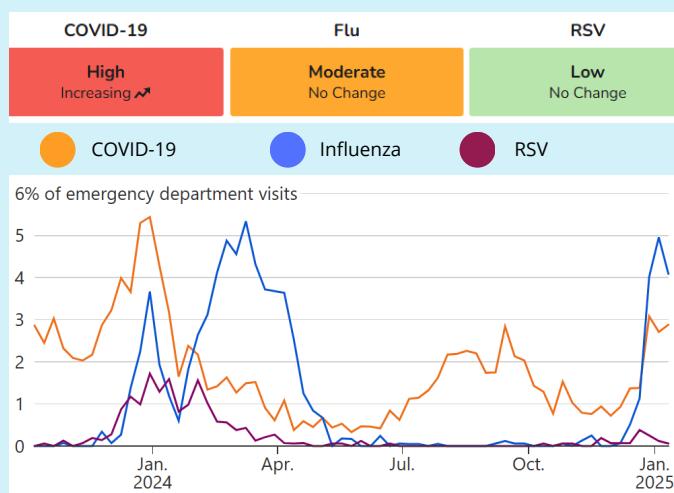
Respiratory Illness Season



In Grand Traverse County, there has been an increase in respiratory illnesses such as influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 due to more people spending time indoors. It is important to stay up-to-date on your vaccinations.

To schedule an appointment, you can call the Grand Traverse County Health Department at 231-995-6131, reach out to your healthcare provider, or visit www.vaccines.gov to find a vaccine location near you.

Respiratory Illness Emergency Department Visits for Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee Counties



Source: CDC (Data as of 1/11/25)

Stop the Spread of Respiratory Infections



Walking Pneumonia

Across Michigan, there has been a notable 4-fold increase in kids with pneumonia, including walking pneumonia, compared to this time last year. Please contact your healthcare provider with any concerns.

Walking pneumonia is a mild form of pneumonia, often caused by the bacterium *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*. Unlike typical pneumonia, it causes milder symptoms such as:

- Persistent cough
- Fatigue
- Low-grade fever
- Sore throat

Most people can go about daily activities with these symptoms, which can last for weeks and develop gradually. It is *contagious* and spreads through respiratory droplets. Treatment includes oral antibiotics and over-the-counter medications for symptom relief. Make sure to cover your coughs and sneezes, as well as wash your hands to prevent spread.

Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can be found in outdoor and indoor air of buildings of all kinds, posing health risks. It is also invisible and odorless, and can seep into homes through cracks in the foundation, walls, or floors. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers.

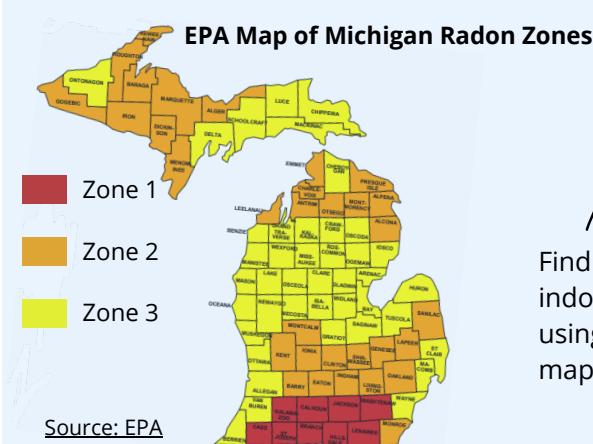
Minimize your risk by:

- Testing your home every 2 years
- Consider installing a mitigation system if your home tests high for radon (between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L)

This month, GTCHD is offering at-home radon test kits for a reduced cost of \$5, or **free** with a nonperishable food donation. More info on how to find and use a radon test kit can be found [here](#).



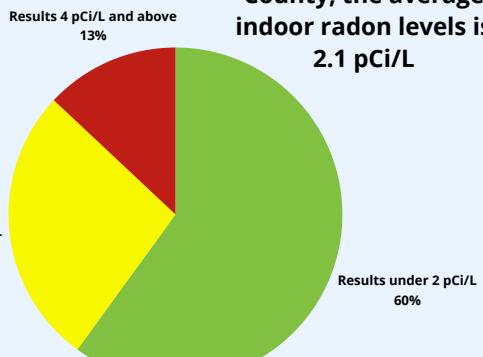
In Grand Traverse County, the average indoor radon levels is 2.1 pCi/L



Find out more on indoor radon results using this interactive map!



Results between 2 and 3.9 pCi/L 27%



Newsflash

Noteworthy Public Health Topics

Whoop, there it is!

- Whooping cough cases at their highest in at least 20 years in Michigan
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services



A little downstate

Norovirus is on the rise in the country and on cruise ships

- Michigan
- Elsewhere

You've been warned

In the U.S., there are ~100,000 alcohol-related cancer cases and ~20,000 cancer deaths annually

- U.S. Surgeon General outlines a link between alcohol consumption and increased cancer risk

Birds of a feather flock together

- H5N1 bird flu updates
 - First H5 human death reported in U.S.
 - Current Situation
 - USDA: Livestock Cases
 - WastewaterSCAN Dashboard

It takes a Village

The number of unhoused seniors is estimated to triple between 2019 and 2030 in the U.S.

- Preparing for the 'gray wave'



2024 Communicable Disease Report

| Disease | Dec 2024 | 2024 | 5-Year Median (2019-2023) |
|---|------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 (tested at medical facilities) | 92 | 639 | 3,234 |
| Campylobacter | 2 | 30 | 12 |
| Cryptosporidiosis | 1 | 13 | 6 |
| Giardiasis | 1 | 13 | 6 |
| Salmonellosis | 1 | 12 | 7 |
| Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli -(STEC) | 0 | 7 | 6 |
| Shigellosis | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Yersinia enteritis | 0 | 6 | 2 |
| Meningitis -Aseptic | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Streptococcus pneumoniae, Invasive | 0 | 8 | 6 |
| Cyclosporiasis | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Blastomycosis | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Guillain-Barre Syndrome | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Histoplasmosis | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Legionellosis | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Streptococcal Disease, Invasive, Group A | 0 | 13 | 5 |
| Vibriosis -Non Cholera | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Bat and Animal Bite Exposure | 12 | 248 | 200 |
| Chlamydia (Genital) | 7 | 135 | 249 |
| Gonorrhea | 2 | 18 | 39 |
| Syphilis -Early Latent | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Syphilis -Secondary | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Syphilis -Unknown Duration or Late | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Latent Tuberculosis Infection | 0 | 6 | 1 |
| Nontuberculous Mycobacterium | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Chickenpox (Varicella) | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Pertussis (Whooping Cough) | 1 | 38 | 2 |
| Dengue Fever | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Anaplasmosis | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Lyme Disease | 0 | 11 | 9 |
| Malaria | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Hepatitis B, Acute | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Hepatitis B, Chronic | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Hepatitis C, Chronic | 0 | 19 | 28 |
| Total | 121 | 1,252 | |

*2024 includes Confirmed and Probable case counts from 1/1/2024-12/31/2024

Note: The median reflects 5-year YTD cumulative totals by month, summing cases from January to each month annually