



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# Emergency Preparedness

March 2015

Genesee County Health Department

For more emergency preparedness information, visit the Genesee County Health Department on the web at [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us).

## Resources for Emergency Preparedness Information

- [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)
- [www.do1thing.com](http://www.do1thing.com)
- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- [www.michigan.gov/flu/](http://www.michigan.gov/flu/)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



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## Michigan Childhood Immunization Waiver Information

Michigan has one of the highest childhood immunization waiver rates in the country. Some counties in Michigan have waiver rates as high as 20.7%; some school buildings have even higher waiver rates. Genesee County's waiver rate is 5% and several schools are much higher. This leaves communities vulnerable to diseases such as measles, chickenpox, and pertussis (whooping cough). Immunizations are one of the most effective measures to protect children from harmful diseases and even death.

In December 2014,

Michigan changed the administrative rules for parents opting their children out of getting vaccinated before entering school.

The new rule allows parents to have the opportunity to have their concerns and questions about immunizations addressed and to receive scientific-based education and resources.

The new rule requires schools and child care centers to refer parents requesting a nonmedical waiver for immunizations to the county health department for immunization waiver

education and waiver certification. Schools and childcare centers will only be able to accept a certified State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form that which has the county health department stamp and signature of the authorizing agent completing immunization education. The certified nonmedical waiver can only be obtained at a county health department.

Students who do not have a completed immunization record or a certified waiver form may be excluded from school or childcare.

## March is Red Cross Month

March is Red Cross Month. The American Red Cross, Genesee-Lapeer Chapter is a key humanitarian partner and a vital participant in Michigan's plan and programs to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. The Chapter responds to an average of 3 disasters a week including fires, floods, oil spills and other emergencies. They provide immediate humanitarian aid

to people affected by these disasters each year.

Between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013, the Genesee-Lapeer Chapter responded to 240 disasters, providing immediate humanitarian assistance to 309 families and first responders. They also trained 8,006 residents to be ready with vital life-saving skills, including CPR/AED and first aid. They provided 241 individuals, families,

and businesses with preparedness information and skills.

The work of many volunteers enables the Red Cross to continue their important work. There are many ways you can get involved and support the Red Cross. Visit <http://www.redcross.org/mi/flint> to learn more.



**American Red Cross**

## Flood Safety Awareness



Flooding is one of the top five identified hazards in Genesee County. Some floods develop slowly from melting snow, while others such as flash floods can happen very quickly.

It is important to review the following tips to learn what to do before, during and after a flood to stay safe.

### Before a flood

- Build an emergency kit and make a family communication plan.
- Learn how to turn off electrical, gas and water supplies at your home before a flood strikes.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks and clean containers with lids with clean water.
- Bring outdoor possessions, such as

lawn furniture, grills and trash cans inside or tie them down securely.

### During a flood

- Listen to the radio or television for information.
- If there is possibility of a flash flood move to higher ground.
- If you have time, move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

### If you have to evacuate remember these tips:

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can

make you fall. Walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.

- Do not drive into flooded areas. If flood waters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely.
- Do not camp or park along streams, rivers or creeks.

### After a flood

- Remember to discard or disinfect everything in your home that was flooded because flood water could be contaminated with chemicals and/or sewage. For more information visit [www.ready.gov/flood](http://www.ready.gov/flood).

*Check out the Red Cross's free mobile apps providing alerts for weather hazards, first aid, shelter, pet first aid, and more at [www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps)*

## Norovirus on the Rise in Genesee County



Genesee County has been experiencing an increase in Norovirus activity. Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines which can lead to diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain.

Norovirus spreads very quickly and easily. People with the virus shed billions of virus particles in their stool and vomit and can easily infect others. The virus can spread very quickly in places with close contact such as daycares, nursing

homes, and schools.

The virus can spread through:

- Close contact with an infected person.
- Touching infected objects or surfaces and then putting your fingers in your mouth.
- Eating food or drinking liquids contaminated with the virus.

To help prevent the virus from spreading wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using the restroom and before eating. Do not prepare food or care for others

while you are sick and for 2-3 days after you recover.

Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces. To disinfect use a chlorine bleach solution with a concentration of 5-25 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water.

Laundry that has been contaminated should be washed immediately and thoroughly. Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and wash your hands immediately after.

For more information visit [www.cdc.gov/norovirus](http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus).