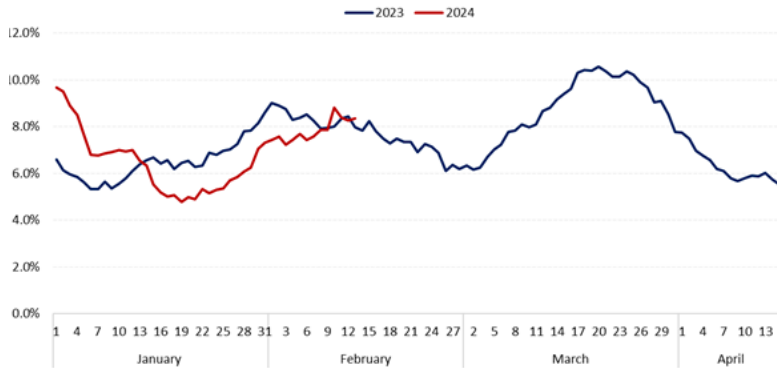


HEALTHY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

A School Health Newsletter from the Barry-Eaton District Health Department

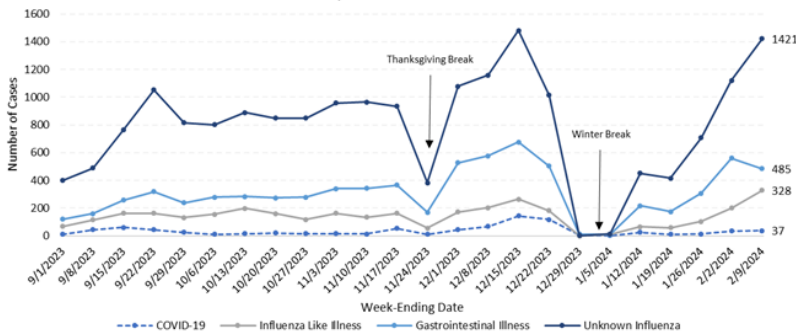
School-Reported Illnesses Have Been Rising Since Winter Break

Percent of Gastrointestinal-Categorized Emergency Department (ED) or Urgent Care (UC) Visits Ages 0-17, Barry-Eaton Jurisdiction



Emergency department (ED) and urgent care (UC) data from 2023 showed an increase in percent of gastrointestinal illness cases among children aged 0-17 around this time last year - data from this year reflects a similar rise in cases. Be prepared for GI illnesses that commonly circulate in schools and take the appropriate precautions to mitigate spread in the classroom and daycares using these [Guidelines for Environmental Cleaning](#).

Reported Illness by Schools and Daycares Barry-Eaton Jurisdiction



COVID-19 cases during the 2023-2024 school year peaked just before the winter holiday break. Since returning to school in January, COVID-19 cases reported from Barry and Eaton County schools and daycares have remained comparatively low. The increase in illness for the past three weeks has been led by Influenza-like illness, unknown illness, and gastrointestinal (GI) illness.

COVID-19 Guidance

On March 1, 2024, CDC released updated recommendations for how people can protect themselves and their communities from respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. This guidance applies to the general public. **The CDC has not yet offered any updated guidance for schools.**

- Continue to follow the school-specific COVID-19 guidance from the CDC that has been in place.
- Continue to report positive COVID-19 cases to BEDHD.
- BEDHD will communicate CDC changes to school COVID-19 guidance to schools.

Measles Update

Three Measles cases have been identified in Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. **There have been no cases within the Barry-Eaton jurisdiction.**

Symptoms:

- Rash
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- High Fever
- Red, Watery Eyes
- Tiny white spots on the inner cheeks, gums and roof of the mouth

Transmission:

- Coughing / sneezing
- Remains in airspace for up to 2 hours

If untreated, Measles can lead to:

- Pneumonia
- Brain Damage
- Deafness
- Death



Most individuals need 2 doses of the MMR vaccine before they reach 6 years of age. Adults who haven't been immunized should get 1 dose, while high-risk individuals should get 2 doses. Families can contact their healthcare provider to verify their immunization status and schedule an appointment if necessary.

If your school becomes aware of a suspected or confirmed case of measles, **immediately report it** to the local health department. Measles cases can be reported to BEDHD at (517) 541-2641.



March is National Nutrition Month



Studies show that students in school meal programs consume more whole grains, milk, fruits, and vegetables during mealtimes and have better overall diet quality, than nonparticipants.

Eating breakfast at school is associated with better attendance rates, fewer missed school days, and better test scores.

Schools can encourage students to participate in the school meal programs by:

- Providing meals that are nutritious and appealing.
- Obtaining input from students and parents about items they would like to see served in the meals.
- Ensuring students have adequate time to eat their meals (at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch).
- Not disclosing the status of students who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.

Hearing & Vision Screenings - Kindergarten Roundups

- Hearing and vision screenings are required prior to the start of kindergarten.
- To schedule screenings at your Kindergarten Assessment days:
 - Call (517) 541-2604
 - Email bpopp@bedhd.org or kbrown@bedhd.org



General school illness and communicable disease questions can be directed to 517-541-2677 or schools@bedhd.org.

Head Lice

- While the “peak” season for head lice is in the Fall, cases can remain high during winter when we spend more time close together indoors.
- If lice or eggs are found on the scalp of a student, allow them to stay in class for the remainder of the day.
 - Consider restricting them from activities involving close head-to-head contact.
 - Immediate removal is unnecessary and may lead to embarrassment or ridicule. Confidentiality is crucial!
- Inform parents on how to check for and treat lice cases, and have students stay home until treatment has concluded.
- Have a designated staff member check students upon return - lack of live lice means they’re clear to go to class!
- You can find additional guidance in the [Michigan Head Lice Manual](#).
- Contact BEDHD at schools@bedhd.org with any questions!



Bed Bugs

- Summer presents the best conditions for bed bugs to appear in the home, but they can be a year-round issue.
- Prevention is the most effective answer; clean clothes and bedding regularly, vacuum carpeting, and encase mattresses and box springs in protective plastic covers.
- Bed Bugs are not known to spread disease, but they are an irritation. Have a plan in place to contact a pest management company if the need arises!