



March

2025

Westfield Regional Health Department

Your Health Matters

Monthly Newsletter

Proudly serving Chatham Borough, Fanwood, Garwood, Madison, Mountainside, New Providence, Roselle Park, Summit, and Westfield



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1 Prioritizing Women's Health in March and Beyond

Women's health is a cornerstone of public health, as women often serve as caregivers and decision-makers in family health. During Women's History Month, we encourage all women to prioritize their well-being by focusing on preventive care, mental health, and community support.

Regular health screenings are essential in preventing diseases and catching health issues early.

- Mammograms (age 40 or earlier with risk factors)
- Pap smears and HPV tests (age 21)
- Heart health screenings (blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels)
- Bone density tests (postmenopausal women)
- Colorectal cancer screenings (age 45)

As women are at a higher risk for anxiety and depression, we emphasize the importance of:

- Seeking support through therapy, counseling, or peer groups
- Practicing mindfulness, meditation, or stress-relief
- Prioritizing self-care and work-life balance
- Connecting with community programs and support networks

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International Women's Day is March 8



#IWD2025 | #AccelerateAction

It is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

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Honoring Contributions by Women to Public Health

March is Women's History Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the remarkable achievements of women throughout history.

We are proud to acknowledge the significant contributions of women in the field of public health, whose efforts have shaped medical advancements, disease prevention, and community wellness initiatives that benefit us all today.

- **Florence Nightingale** (1820–1910) – Widely regarded as the founder of modern nursing, Nightingale revolutionized hospital sanitation practices, reducing mortality rates and setting the foundation for public health nursing.
- **Dr. Virginia Apgar** (1909–1974) – A pioneering anesthesiologist, Dr. Apgar developed the Apgar Score, a vital tool still used today to assess newborn health immediately after birth.
- **Dr. Antonia Novello** (born 1944) – The first woman and first Hispanic U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Novello focused on children's health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS awareness, childhood immunizations, and reducing youth tobacco use.

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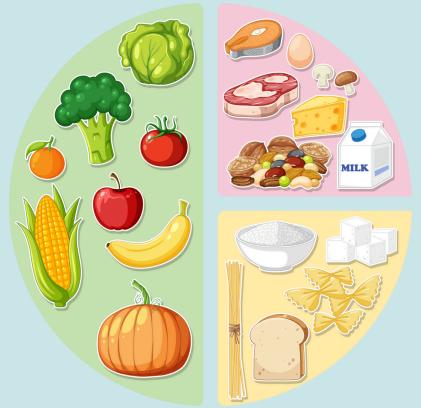
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Celebrating National Nutrition Month

Fueling Your Health

March is also National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to highlight the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. This month is a great opportunity to take a closer look at your diet and lifestyle, making small but meaningful changes that can improve your overall well-being.

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The Power of Nutrition

Nutrition plays a vital role in maintaining good health and preventing chronic diseases. A well-balanced diet can boost your immune system, enhance brain function, and provide the energy needed for daily activities. Some key elements of a nutritious diet include:

- Eating a variety of foods – Incorporate fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats into your meals to ensure you get a range of essential nutrients.
- Staying hydrated – Water is crucial for digestion, circulation, and temperature regulation. Aim for at least 8 glasses a day.
- Portion control – Be mindful of serving sizes to avoid overeating and maintain a healthy weight.
- Limiting processed foods – Reduce intake of foods high in added sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats to promote heart and metabolic health.

Simple Ways to Improve Your Eating Habits

1) Plan Your Meals

Preparing meals ahead of time can help you make healthier choices and save money.

2) Snack Smart

Opt for nutrient-dense snacks like nuts, yogurt, or fruit instead of processed snacks.

3) Read Nutrition Labels

Understanding food labels can help you make better choices at the grocery store.

4) Cook More at Home

Preparing meals at home allows you to control ingredients and portion sizes.

5) Stay Active

Pair a nutritious diet with regular physical activity for optimal health benefits.

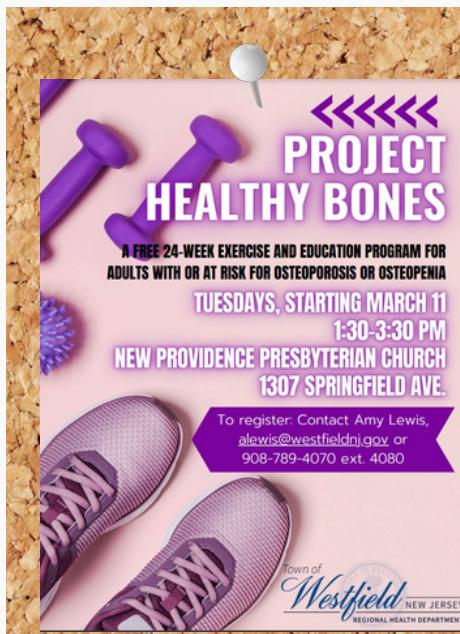


Challenge yourself to adopt healthier habits and encourage those around you to do the same. Whether it's trying a new recipe, swapping out sugary drinks, or adding more veggies to your plate, every small step counts.

Let's make this month a time to fuel our bodies with the nutrients they need for a healthier, happier life!

3

Local Upcoming Events & Awareness Days



**PROJECT
HEALTHY BONES**
A FREE 24-WEEK EXERCISE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR
ADULTS WITH OR AT RISK FOR OSTEOPOROSIS OR OSTEOPENIA
TUESDAYS, STARTING MARCH 11
1:30-3:30 PM
NEW PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1307 SPRINGFIELD AVE.
To register: Contact Amy Lewis,
alewis@westfieldnj.gov or
908-789-4070 ext. 4080
Town of Westfield, NEW JERSEY
REGIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Improve bone health and strength with Project Healthy Bones, a free 24-week exercise and education program for adults at risk for osteoporosis or osteopenia. Sessions begin Tuesday, March 11, from 1:30–3:30 PM at New Providence Presbyterian Church. To register, contact Amy Lewis at alewis@westfieldnj.gov or 908-789-4070 ext. 4080.



Put Life Back in Your Life:
**Take Control
of Your Health**
**Feel better.
Be in control.
Do the things
you want to do.**
When: April 11
April 25
May 2
May 9
May 16
May 23
1:30-3:30 pm
Where: New Providence Memorial Library, 377 Elkwood Ave., Conti Room
Participants will receive a free book!
To register or for more information, please call or email Amy Lewis at 908-789-4070 ext. 4080, alewis@westfieldnj.gov

If you're 55+ with a chronic condition, join this free six-week program starting April 11, Thursdays from 1–3:30 PM at New Providence Memorial Library. Learn to manage symptoms, improve well-being, and receive a free book!

DON'T
MISS!

Month-Long Observances:

- [Brain Injury Awareness](#)
- [Multiple Sclerosis Awareness](#)
- [National Colorectal Cancer Awareness](#)
- [National Bleeding Disorders Awareness](#)
- [National Kidney Month](#)

Key Days & Weeks:

- [World Hearing Day on March 3](#)
- [Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week March 9 to 15](#)
- [National Sleep Awareness Week March 9 to 15](#)
- [World Tuberculosis Day on March 24](#)
- [Wear Purple Day for Epilepsy Awareness on March 26](#)

Bird Flu Update

While the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) is still describing the risk to humans as low, NJ public health officials are closely monitoring bird flu outbreaks nationally. As of March 1, there were none reported in NJ.

The virus, also known as avian influenza or H5N1, has spread to dozens of humans, mostly farm and dairy workers. As of Jan. 14, 2025, it has resulted in 68 diagnosed cases and one human death.

Should I Avoid Eggs and Milk?

Not at this time according to the CDC. They recommend cooking eggs to an internal temperature of 165 degrees - yolks should be firm, and scrambled eggs should not be runny. If consuming milk products, be sure they are pasteurized.

GUIDELINES



Report dead birds to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection by calling 1-877-WARN-DEP.

H5N1 bird has been identified in wild birds, dairy cows, poultry, and some individuals who have been exposed to sick animals. While the current public health risk remains low, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is monitoring the situation carefully and working with local health departments to monitor people with animal exposures.

To protect yourself and others:

- Do not touch sick or dead birds, or surfaces contaminated with bird feces.
- If handling a dead bird is necessary, wear gloves and a face mask and place in a plastic bag.
- Wash hands with soap and water after handling any bird or contaminated surface.
- Wash any clothing worn during handling in hot water.
- Dispose carefully to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Do not drink raw milk or give raw milk to pets.

Signs of bird flu

In birds

- Sudden death without prior signs of illness
- Reduced energy or appetite
- Pus-like discharge or swelling of various body parts
- Reduced egg production or soft-shelled/misshapen eggs
- Nasal discharge, coughing, or sneezing
- Diarrhea or watery droppings
- Nervous system symptoms like tremors, lack of coordination, or paralysis

Signs of bird flu

In humans

- Fever and chills
- Cough and sore throat
- Muscle aches and general discomfort
- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Fever with aches (fever, swollen, or irritated eyes)
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Severe respiratory distress, such as pneumonia or respiratory failure

If you become sick within 10 days of an exposure to a potentially infected bird or other animal, isolate at home and call your health care provider.

westfieldnj.gov/health [Follow us on social media](#)

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4

Spring Allergy Awareness & Prevention

Nip Seasonal Allergies in the Bud

Spring means flower buds and blooming trees — and if you're one of the millions of people who have seasonal allergies, it also means sneezing, congestion, a runny nose, and other bothersome symptoms. Seasonal allergies — also called hay fever and allergic rhinitis — can make you miserable. But before you settle for plastic flowers and artificial turf, try these simple strategies to keep seasonal allergies under control.

Reduce Your Exposure to Allergy Triggers

To reduce your exposure to the things that trigger your allergy signs and symptoms (allergens):

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Avoid lawn mowing, weed pulling and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.
- Remove clothes you've worn outside and shower to rinse pollen from your skin and hair.
- Don't hang laundry outside — pollen can stick to sheets and towels.
- Wear a face mask if you do outside chores.

Source: Mayo Clinic | 2025

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Take Extra Steps When Pollen Counts are High

Seasonal allergy signs and symptoms can flare up when there's a lot of pollen in the air. These steps can help you reduce your exposure:

- If high pollen counts are forecasted, start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start.
- Close doors and windows at night if possible or any other time when pollen counts are high.
- Use air conditioning at home or when driving in a car.
- Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen counts are highest.
- Vacuum floors often to remove pollen from carpets.
- Rinse sinuses with a saline solution.
- When home remedies are not enough, consult your health care provider.

Source: American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology | 2024

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Recipe of the Month

Garlicky Grilled Steak & Kale Salad

Try this easy recipe (and the 30 others) from Eating Well Magazine's "31 Healthy Dinners to Make in March."

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