

Your Health Matters

Westfield Regional Health Department

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



July
2024

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Celebrated This Month

Independence Day

July 4th is a time for celebration with friends and family, but it's crucial to ensure everyone stays safe while enjoying the activities that make this day special.

It is estimated that nearly **60.6 million people will travel by car** for the holiday. Stay alert and avoid distractions to prevent accidents. Designate a sober driver or take advantage of ride-hailing apps if alcohol is being consumed.

If using **fireworks**, follow local laws and guidelines. Keep a safe distance from spectators, never aim fireworks at people or buildings, and have a bucket of water or hose nearby for emergencies.

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Grilling Safety

Grill safely for the 4th of July

July is the peak month for grill fires. If grilling, ensure your grill is in good working order and placed in a safe location away from flammable materials. Keep children and pets away from the grill area, and never leave it unattended while in use.

Make sure you follow **proper food safety while grilling.**

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World Hepatitis Day

July 28

Viral hepatitis affects more than 300 million people worldwide and leads to more than 1 million deaths each year. Despite effective vaccines, prevention strategies, and medications, deaths from hepatitis are increasing globally. Thousands of people

are newly infected with viral hepatitis every year in the United States. It is a serious public health threat that kills thousands of Americans annually and is a leading cause of liver cancer. Hepatitis A and hepatitis B are vaccine-preventable, and hepatitis C can be cured. Learn more about prevention and what is being done.

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Department/Local Highlights

Health Officer

What you should know

The Health Officer plays a crucial role in safeguarding public health within the communities being served. They are responsible for evaluating health problems, developing necessary budget procedures to finance the department's activities, and directing staff to carry out these activities. They enforce applicable laws, local ordinances, and regulations while also serving as a liaison between state officials, local elected officials, and your community on issues concerning local environmental and public health.

The Health Officer ensures that the health department activities follow the 10 Essential Public Health Services:

1. Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets.
2. Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population.
3. Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it.
4. Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health.
5. Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws that impact health.
6. Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public's health.
7. Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy.
8. Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce.
9. Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and continuous quality improvement.
10. Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health.

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Drive Safe this Summer

It's the busiest & most dangerous time to travel

Memorial Day to Labor Day is considered the most dangerous and busiest travel time of the year. With New Jersey's beautiful beaches and other summer activities, the roads will be even busier than usual.

While alcohol remains the substance most commonly responsible for impaired driving crashes, other illicit and recreational drugs can be equally dangerous.



New Jersey's New Initiative Combating impaired driving

The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey and the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety have partnered to share the risks of prescription opioids and their link to impaired driving with residents throughout the state. In an initiative launched in June, more than 900 independent pharmacies have begun to dispense prescriptions in bags with a message alerting customers of the possible side effects of medications and the reminder that "There is no safe way to drive under the influence."

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Healthy Vision

July marks Healthy Vision Month. Vision impairment has a major impact on every facet of life, presenting formidable challenges in performing everyday tasks which can diminish independence and quality of life. Beyond practical hurdles, the stigma surrounding visual impairment exacerbates feelings of isolation, fear, anxiety, or grief. According to the National Eye Institute, about 80% of all visual impairments worldwide can be prevented, treated, or cured properly. The top two most common causes of blindness are Cataracts and Glaucoma.

[Visually Impaired Resource List](#)

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Good Food For Eye Health

Simple Recipes

Researchers have linked eye-friendly nutrients, such as lutein and zeaxanthin, vitamin C, vitamin E, and zinc, to reducing the risk of certain eye diseases including age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.

Banana, Blueberry and Pomegranate Smoothie

You get carotenoids from the kale, lutein from the blueberries, vitamin C from the pomegranate juice, and potassium from the bananas and fiber!



Zucchini Fritters



Zucchini is rich in lutein and zeaxanthin, two antioxidants that were found to prevent age-related macular degeneration. This easy recipe only has three ingredients.

[Click to see more recipes for better vision.](#)

Keep Your Eyes Healthy

Healthy vision tips

Eat right to protect your sight: Eat different types of fruits and veggies, especially leafy greens like spinach, kale, and collard greens.

Get moving: Being overweight can put you at higher risk for diabetes and other conditions that can lead to vision problems.

Keep the germs away: Always wash your hands before putting them close to your eyes.

Gear up: Wear safety glasses if you are engaging in work/activities that pose the risk of eye injury.

Wear your shades: Choose sunglasses that block 99% or 100% of both UVA and UVB radiation from the sun.

Give your eyes a break: Do you stare at a screen a lot? Give your eyes a rest with the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

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Disease Update

Poison Ivy

What you should know

Poison ivy is most dangerous in the spring and summer because the plant's oil content is highest during these seasons and can remain on objects for months.

Poison ivy and other poison plant rashes can't be spread from person to person. But it is possible to pick up the rash from plant oil that may have stuck to clothing, pets, garden tools, and other items that have come in contact with these plants.

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What To Do If Your Exposed

First Aid

If you are exposed to a poisonous plant:

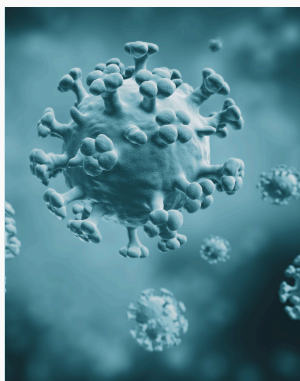
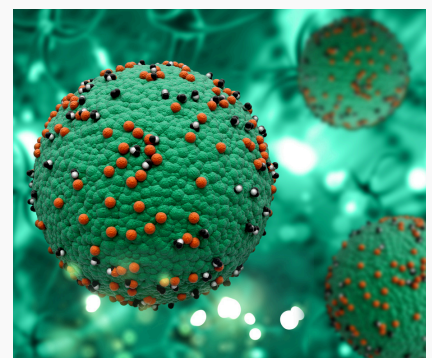
- Immediately rinse skin with rubbing alcohol, poison plant wash, or degreasing soap (such as dishwashing soap) or detergent, and lots of water. Rinse frequently so that wash solutions do not dry on the skin and further spread the urushiol.
- Scrub under nails with a brush.
- Apply wet compresses, calamine lotion, or hydrocortisone cream to the skin to reduce itching and blistering. Oatmeal baths may relieve itching.
- An antihistamine may help relieve itching. NOTE: These may cause drowsiness.
- In severe cases or if the rash is on the face or genitals, seek professional medical attention.
- Call 911 if you have a severe allergic reaction, such as swelling or difficulty breathing, or have had a severe reaction in the past.

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Measles Update

Cases increase nationwide

As of June 13, 2024, CDC has been notified of 151 confirmed cases of measles in the US across 22 jurisdictions, including 11 outbreaks. Many of the cases reported in 2024 are linked to international travel and are among children and individuals who had not received measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. As of June 20, 2024, NJ has had 2 confirmed measles cases.

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Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

Risk of drinking raw milk

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and Department of Agriculture (NJDA) are reminding residents of the risks associated with consuming raw milk amidst the current H5N1 Avian Influenza (Bird flu) outbreak, especially considering virus detections in dairy cows in some states. There have been no reports of H5N1 bird flu among residents and no detections in dairy cows in New Jersey.

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