

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

www.middlebrookhealth.org

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FALL/WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTERS

Fight the Flu – Get Vaccinated!

The best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year. The Flu vaccine takes about two weeks to cause antibodies to develop in the body. The antibodies protect the body against influenza viruses. Other measures like avoiding sick people, covering your cough, and frequently washing your hands can also prevent the spread of germs and avert respiratory illnesses like the flu. Young children, pregnant people, persons with certain chronic health disorders including asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease, and those 65 years of age and older are all at an increased risk of developing severe flu complications. People who work in healthcare, people who provide care, or who have close contact with those at high risk for complications from the flu need to protect themselves and those they look after.



Contact the Health Commission at **732-968-5151** for information about locally available flu vaccines.

The National Emergency is over, but COVID-19 isn't!

The [COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ended in May 2023](#), but as we know, the concern about the virus did not. As we approach the winter season, please remember that even when COVID-19 case numbers are low in our community, do not let your guard down. Similar to preventing other infectious diseases, follow these tips to stop the spread:

- Stay Home if Sick
- Wash Your Hands Frequently
- Cover Your Coughs and Sneezes
- Make Sure You and Your Children are up to date with the COVID-19 Vaccine
 - To stay updated with the CDC's COVID-19 Vaccine recommendations, [click here](#)
 - Visit Vaccines.gov to find a COVID-19 vaccine near you!
- Clean and Disinfect Frequently Used Surfaces in your household, such as door handles and light switches

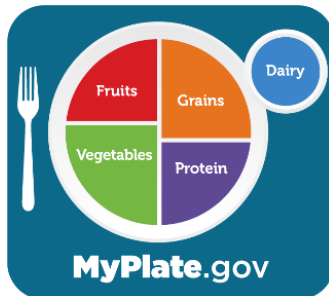


Staying vigilant and following these preventive measures can significantly protect ourselves, our families, and our community from COVID-19.

COVID-19 Vaccines are free and available to all people living in the U.S., regardless of immigration or health insurance status.

Healthy Habits

Nutrition during the Holidays - The holiday season is a time of joy, celebration, and delicious food. It is also a time when many of us find it challenging to stick to our healthy eating habits. Follow these tips to enjoy delicious meals while feeling good!



- Moderation is Key – Enjoy your favorite treats but practice food portioning.
- Fill up on Healthy Options – Fill your plate with vegetables, proteins, and whole grains first.
- Bring a Dish – Consider bringing a healthy and tasty meal.
- Practice Mindful Eating – Pay attention to your body’s hunger and fullness cues and eat slowly.

Take care of your health while celebrating with those who matter most. MyPlate is a nutrition guide developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help individuals make healthier food choices. Visit: <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen> to find low-cost, healthy meals to bring to the table.

Physical Activity - Stay active as the weather gets colder! Physical activity can boost your mood, improve your cardiovascular health, increase your energy, improve sleeping conditions, reduce anxiety, and keep your mind sharp. During the colder months, it may be more difficult to engage in active lifestyles as slippery conditions arise and daylight falls short. It is important to maintain regular physical activity during the fall and winter months. For those who are medically cleared, the American College of Sports Medicine recommends 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. That’s only about 20 minutes per day! Here are some ways to stay active:

- If Weather Allows (no snow or ice), Go for a Brisk Walk
- Don’t Like the Cold? Take a Walk at the Mall
- Take Standing or Walking-In-Place Breaks while Watching TV
- Yardwork and Household Chores Count as Physical Activity!
- Find an Exercise Video That’s Right for You Online



To learn more about physical activity, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/>

Seasonal Affective Disorder - As days get shorter and the leaves begin to change – let’s be aware of **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)**. You may know it as “seasonal depression”, SAD is a form of depression that typically occurs in the fall and winter months. People with SAD experience symptoms similar to depression, such as sadness and anxiety, fatigue, loss of interest in activities, and difficulty concentrating. Seasonal

Affective Disorder can significantly impact a person's life, affecting their mood, energy levels, and overall quality of life. Fortunately, there are treatment options for individuals affected by SAD. Talk with your healthcare provider if you are concerned and think you are suffering from SAD. Additionally, practicing self-care, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and staying connected with loved ones can help mitigate the impact of SAD and improve overall well-being during this time of year.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. **Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.**

Contact the Health Commission at **732-968-5151** or visit our website: middlebrookhealth.org to locate mental health services in Somerset County.

Rabies Clinics

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission plans to offer several rabies clinics in the fall to assure availability of **free** rabies vaccines for our cat and dog owners.



Here is the **Tentative** Schedule:

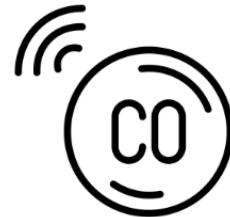
- November 4, 9 am to 10 am
Green Brook, NJ
- November 18, 9 am to 10:30 am
Bridgewater, NJ
- December 2, 9 am to 10 am
Watchung, NJ

As we are still working to coordinate all the moving pieces to make these clinics happen, residents are asked to call the Health Commission at **732-968-5151** or **scan the QR code to view the Commission's Calendar** in late September/October to confirm the dates, times, and locations. All cats must be held in a carrier and all dogs must be leashed.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention

The following information is courtesy of the New Jersey Poison Control Center
<https://www.njpies.org/> 1-800-222-1222

Exposure to Carbon Monoxide (CO) can cause CO poisoning which can result in sudden illness and death. CO poisoning gives no warning since you cannot detect it through sight, smell, or taste. That means buildup of dangerous CO levels can happen quickly – harming anyone, including pets who breathe in the fumes. Early signs and symptoms of CO poisoning may include headache, dizziness, weakness, tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. CO poisoning is a medical emergency that requires you to act quickly. If you're feeling sick, everyone, including pets, should leave the area immediately and contact emergency medical services.



Common sources of accidental CO poisoning include heating appliances and other equipment that use carbon-based fuel in private residences, guest homes, or lodging and rental facilities. Accidental CO poisoning is preventable when functional carbon monoxide detectors are in use. We especially need to be careful in commercial facilities like resorts or hotels and even in residential-type rentals and Airbnb rentals. When planning your next gateway, ask the commercial facilities or rentals about their carbon monoxide detector policy. Consider bringing a portable carbon monoxide detector when traveling to prevent CO poisoning.

Call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222

If someone is not breathing, hard to wake up, or having a seizure call 9-1-1

Follow the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission on Social Media!



Tick-Borne Illnesses

[Lyme's disease](#) is an illness caused by bacteria carried by blacklegged ticks, which are found in the Northeast of the United States. Lyme-disease is the most reported tick-borne disease and accounts for 82% of all tick-borne diseases. Other common tick-borne diagnoses include Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis, Ehrlichiosis, and Spotted Fevers. Although tick exposure can occur year-round, remember that they are most active during April-September. Learn more about which tick species are in your area, [here](#).

To prevent tick bites, here are some measures you can take:

- **Know where to expect ticks**—many people encounter ticks in their own yard or neighborhood. Ticks are found in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas. As we spend more time outside during the warmer months of the year, avoid wooded and brushy areas and walk in center of trails.
- **Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered insect repellents](#)** – Repellents such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE) can repel ticks. You can find the product that best suits your needs using the EPA's [search tool](#). Always follow the product label instructions.
- **Treat your Clothes** – Permethrin is an EPA-registered insecticide that kills ticks on contact. Permethrin is safe for people when used according to the product label instructions. Permethrin treated clothes can last through multiples washings
- **Perform regular tick checks** – After spending time outdoors, thoroughly check your body and clothing for ticks. Pay close attention to areas such as the scalp, behind the ears, under the arms, around the waist, between the legs, and back of the knees. Ticks can be as small as a poppy seed, so carefully inspect all areas.
- **Shower after outdoor activity** – Showering within two hours after being outside can help find and wash away unattached ticks.
- **Protect your pets** — Ticks can easily latch onto pets and bring them into your home. Use tick preventatives recommended by your veterinarian, and regularly check your pets for ticks.
- **Know the symptoms** – if you get a tick bite and develop symptoms within a few weeks, visit your healthcare provider. The most common symptoms of tick-related illness include fever/chills, aches and pains, and rashes.

Prevention is key to avoid tick-borne illness. By following these precautions, you can significantly reduce the risk of tick bites and the potential transmission of tick-borne diseases. If you do have a tick bite, [follow these instructions](#) to safely remove and get rid of a live tick.

For more information on ticks, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html> and <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/tickborne.shtml>

Source: NJDOH, CDC

A Message From New Jersey American Water

The Health Department encourages all those served by New Jersey American Water Company to review the following message regarding lead service lines. Your cooperation will assist the company to achieve the goal of replacing all lead service lines. For more information on lead in drinking water please visit:

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/lead/replacement.html>



New Jersey American Water Launching Education Campaign to Encourage Customers to Identify & Report Their Service Line Material

Customer education effort will support company's Lead Service Line Replacement Program, replacing all lead and galvanized water service lines by 2031.

CAMDEN, N.J. – MAY 22, 2023 – New Jersey American Water is launching an education campaign across the company's service areas to encourage customers to self-identify and report the material of the service line that brings water into their home. The educational effort is part of the company's Lead Service Line Replacement Program aimed at replacing all lead and galvanized water service lines by 2031 as mandated by state law.

"Replacing all lead and galvanized water service lines by 2031 is a top priority. The first step in accomplishing this goal, in the most efficient and cost-effective way, is to know where they are so we can remove them in a coordinated method, street-by-street and town-by-town," said Mark McDonough, President, New Jersey American Water. "By educating and empowering our customers to participate in this easy way, we can help accelerate the program more expeditiously than the law's 2031 deadline."

New Jersey American Water is asking their customers to help support the effort by locating and identifying their water service line and submitting a survey with their findings. This can be done in three easy steps and using simple household items such as a magnet and a coin to identify the material of the water service line. The instructions on how to identify your line – including a [video](#) tutorial – and a special portal to submit your findings can be found [here](#).

Starting this week, customers with unknown service line material listed in New Jersey American Water's published [inventory](#) will begin to see information about the campaign through emails from the company, on social media, and in targeted digital, [cable](#) and outdoor advertising.

As part of the program, New Jersey American Water continues to replace lead and galvanized service lines where other infrastructure projects are occurring, as well as based on the prioritization plan for the company's 30 public water systems that scores communities' census tracts by health risk factors. The combination of the education campaign and prioritization plan, as well as partnering closely with municipal officials will allow the company to continue to improve the initiative to mitigate costs over the span of the program.

"We look forward to partnering with our customers, municipalities and other key stakeholders within the communities we serve over the coming months and years to work together towards this goal of replacing all lead service lines statewide once and for all," stated McDonough.

In July 2021, New Jersey enacted legislation requiring all water providers to replace both utility-owned and customer-owned lead and galvanized service lines by 2031. But customer-owned water service lines have historically not been tracked by water utilities, so completing an inventory of customer-owned service lines is a necessary step to replacing all lead or galvanized water service lines.

It is important to note that if your service lines contain lead, it does not mean you cannot use water as you normally do. New Jersey American Water regularly tests for lead in drinking water and the water delivered to customers meets state and federal water quality regulations, including those set for lead.

Launched shortly after Infrastructure Week - which raises awareness about the importance of infrastructure investment and modernization - the customer education effort and the Lead Service Line Replacement Program also represents New Jersey American Water's commitment to investing in its infrastructure. For more information on this program, and lead and drinking water, please visit www.newjerseyamwater.com/leadfacts.

About New Jersey American Water

New Jersey American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest investor-owned water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water and wastewater services to approximately 2.8 million people. For more information, visit www.newjerseyamwater.com and follow New Jersey American Water on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).