

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

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March Newsletter 2026

Latest in Public Health and Upcoming Events




ICYMI: Bird Flu - Public Health Risk Remains Low Recently, there has been an increase in reports of sick and dead wild birds throughout New Jersey. The overall public health risk remains low. New Jersey does not have any reported human cases of bird flu. We encourage residents to review our full announcement [here](#). For more information and to report sick or dying birds, visit dep.nj.gov/njfw.



Poison Prevention Week: March 15-26, 2026 This year's theme is "When the unexpected happens, Poison Help is here for you." Whether you have general questions or an emergency, free Poison Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call Poison Help with questions for medications, cleaning products, insect bites, and food poisoning, just to name a few! Save the number today: 1-800-222-1222. For more information, visit njpies.org.



Groundwater Awareness Week: March 8-14, 2026 Groundwater is the primary water source of 44% of Americans, and a vital resource for all of us. Protect your groundwater by using chemicals minimally and carefully, disposing of household hazardous wastes at official collection sites, fixing leaking pipes, and reducing your water usage. If you inspect your well routinely, your groundwater will serve your household for years! For more information, visit ngwa.org and wellowner.org.

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Colorectal Health

Colorectal Cancer Awareness: Are You Due to Get Screened?

Did you know that regular screening can help prevent colorectal cancer? Screening can also help find colorectal cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

The American Cancer Society® recommends that people at average risk of colorectal cancer start regular screening at age 45. This can be done multiple ways:

Stool-based Tests

- Can be done at home
- Low cost
- No bowel prep or sedation
- Done every year or every 3 years, depending on which test you do

If a person chooses to be screened with a test other than colonoscopy, any abnormal test result should be followed up with a timely colonoscopy.

Visual Exams

- Types of tests include colonoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Done in health facility
- Bowel prep needed
- Can remove and test polyps (small growths that can cause cancer)
- Done every 5 or 10 years, depending on which test you do

There are some differences between the tests to consider. **But the most important thing is to get screened—no matter which test you take.**

You may be at high risk of colorectal cancer if you have a family history or have certain health conditions. Ask your doctor about your risk and see if you should start screening earlier than age 45.

For information on colorectal cancer, visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/coloncancer.

(Source: American Cancer Society)

Uninsured or underinsured individuals who qualify can receive cancer screenings through the NJCEED program. To learn more, click [here](#) or call 1-800-328-3838, then press 3.

Preparedness Corner



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Flooding can occur from heavy rain, snowmelt, storms, and overflowing water systems. Floods can occur slowly over many days or strike suddenly. Floods may lead to power outages, contaminant well water systems, and cause damage to homes, roads, and other structures.

Prepare for a Flood

- Know your risks for floods.
- Make an emergency plan with your family and loved ones.
- Build and update an emergency kit for at home, for the car, and during travel.

Stay Safe During a Flood

- Stay informed. Keep a battery-powered or hand crank radio with spare batteries.
- Do not walk, swim, or drive through floodwaters.
- Listen to local officials and emergency responders. Be prepared to evacuate or shelter in place.

After a Flood

- Pay attention to authorities for instructions and updates. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Avoid wading in floodwater, which can be contaminated and contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.
- Wear heavy work gloves, protective clothing and boots during clean up and use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning mold or other debris. Document any property damage.

Flood Watch

- Flooding is possible.
- Stay tuned to radio, tv, or online for updates and **be ready** to move to higher ground.

Flood Warning

- Flooding is happening or will happen soon.
- Move to high ground **immediately.**

Just getting started in your preparedness era? No problem, we've got you covered! Visit our preparedness page to learn more at middlebrookhealth.org. For more information about preparing for floods, check out ready.gov/floods.

Food for Thought



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Chicken Stewed in Coconut Sauce

This recipe from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is inspired by the traditional Indonesian dish, ayam panggang bumbu besengek. The recipe below serves 4.

Ingredients

- 1 cup long-grain white rice
- 2 tablespoons (24 milliliters) canola oil, divided
- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 shallots, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
- 1 teaspoon coriander, ground
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons lemongrass paste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1¾ cups (400 milliliters) lite coconut milk
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup macadamia nuts, chopped

Directions

1. Cook rice per package instructions.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add 1 tablespoon canola oil and chicken.
3. Cook chicken on one side for 4 to 5 minutes, then turn each piece over and cook another 4 minutes until completely cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C).
4. Turn heat to medium-low and transfer chicken to a plate.
5. In the same skillet, add the remaining 1 tablespoon canola oil. Add shallots, ginger, coriander, turmeric, chili powder, salt, black pepper, lemongrass paste and garlic and stir for 1 to 2 minutes, just enough to sauté the garlic without burning it.
6. Add coconut milk and bring to a slow simmer. Add chicken and simmer for 5 minutes.
7. To serve, scoop ¾ cup rice and ¾ cup chicken mixture onto a plate or bowl. Divide green onions and macadamia nuts evenly into 4 portions to garnish each serving. Serve warm.

For more recipes, visit: eatright.org/recipes

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics