Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

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August Newsletter 2025

Latest in Public Health and Upcoming Events

August Teen Speak Virtual Workshop Series with Empower Somerset. August 19 and 26 from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM. This virtual workshop is designed for parents, caregivers, and guardians of Somerset County. Participants will receive a $25 gift card for completing both sessions. Seating is limited and registration is required. To register, click here.

August is National Breastfeeding Month. Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. There are health benefits for both infants and mothers such as reducing the baby's risk of obesity, asthma, and type 1 diabetes; helping protect the mother from ovarian and breast cancer, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes; and more!

About 1 in 4 infants are exclusively breastfed as recommended until they are 6 months old. Breastfeeding can be challenging, but support is available! If you need additional guidance, talk to your doctor, nurse, or midwife. Norwescap's Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) program in Somerset County has breastfeeding support services for those who qualify. For more information, call: (908) 685-8282 or visit: www.norwescap.org/wic/.

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Immunization Awareness

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National Immunization Awareness Month

According to a recent study, over the past 50 years, vaccination programs have prevented an estimated 154 million deaths from 14 different diseases. During National Immunization Awareness Month, we encourage you to talk with your healthcare provider about staying up-to-date on routine vaccinations. Immunizations help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Immunity

Immunity is protection from an infectious disease. Immunity to an infectious disease occurs with the presence of antibodies to that disease in a person's immune system. There are two types of immunity: active and passive.

Active Immunity

Happens through natural immunity or vaccine-induced immunity.

Natural immunity is when your body learns to fight off an infection when you have been sick before.

Vaccine-induced immunity happens through the introduction of a killed or weakened form of the disease through vaccination.

Active immunity takes time to develop but is long-lasting.

Passive Immunity

Occurs when a person is given antibodies to a disease rather than producing them on their own.

- A newborn receives antibodies from their mother through the placenta
- Antibody-containing blood products such as immune globulin

Passive Immunity is immediate but only lasts a few weeks or months.

Traveling

International travel increases your chances of getting and spreading diseases that are not as common in the United States. Before you travel, it is important to make sure you are up to date with all of your routine vaccines. Depending on your travel plan, you may need additional travel vaccinations. Make an appointment with your healthcare provider at least 4-6 weeks before you leave to discuss destination specific considerations.

For more information on traveler's health, visit: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel

Prevent Wildlife Encounters

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Rabies is caused by a virus which can infect both people and animals. Warm blooded animals such as foxes, raccoons, and other wildlife can carry and transmit rabies. Rabies is a serious and potentially fatal disease that is almost 100% preventable. Avoid encounters with wildlife.

Do Not Feed

- Human or pet food is not healthy for wild animals
- Animals may lose fear of humans which can be dangerous

Keep a Safe Distance

- You are too close to wildlife if their behavior changes
- Do not approach or pet wild animals
- Do not pick up sick or dead animals

Keep your Pets Safe

- Make sure your pet's rabies vaccine is up-to-date and is licensed
- Always keep pets on leashes in public spaces
- Prevent your pets from interacting with wild animals

Be Aware

- Be aware of your surroundings while outdoors
- Stay on trails at parks and follow visitor guidelines
- Before visiting a new place, research local wildlife you may encounter

If you see an animal that appears to be sick, is acting strange, or showing unusual behavior, do not approach them and contact your local police department immediately.

For more information, visit:
cdc.gov/rabies and cdc.gov/healthy-pets/about/wildlife.html

Preparedness Corner

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Back-to-School Preparedness

Parents and Guardians, as we near that time of year when kids head back to the classroom, the health and safety of students are a top priority. When your children return to school, it can be an exciting yet stressful transition. Prepare now by following these tips:

- **Prevent illness:** Take measures to prevent getting sick. Hand hygiene is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs! Practice hand hygiene with your children and teach them to wash their hands often.

- **Plan for the unexpected:** Ask the school how you would be reunited with your child in an emergency or evacuation. Complete an emergency contact card that contains up-to-date contact information and keep one in your child's backpack and one in your wallet.

- **Pack the essentials:** other items to keep in their backpack include water and non-perishable snacks; a pocket-sized first aid kit; and a list of allergies, medical conditions, and medications—make sure their school and teacher have a copy, too.

Talk with your children's healthcare provider to ensure they have the shots they need to protect themselves and others from diseases.

To view the New Jersey School Immunization Requirements, visit the following webpages:

Child Care/ Preschool
- nj.gov/health

School K-12
- nj.gov/health

For more information on vaccines, visit:
- vaccineinformation.org/

Recipe of the Month

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PASTA AND SPINACH PESTO

Ingredients

- 1 pound whole wheat spaghetti, uncooked (or your favorite pasta shape)
- 1 package 10-ounce frozen spinach, thawed, well drained
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 1/3 cup water
- 2 ounces crumbled feta cheese

(8 Servings)

Directions

1. In a blender (or food processor), combine spinach, oil, Parmesan cheese, parsley, garlic, salt, and basil. Mix at medium speed until finely chopped.
2. Melt margarine in water. With blender or processor running, gradually pour in melted margarine mixture until blended.
3. Cook pasta according to package directions.
4. Toss pesto with cooked pasta.
5. Sprinkle feta on top and serve.

For more recipes, visit: myplate.gov