

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

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FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

COVID-19 IS STILL WITH US

Unfortunately, and frustratingly, we are all still very much being impacted by the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is successfully evolving allowing it to infect more and more friends and family members of many we know. The latest Delta variant is of particular concern because it is much more infectious and able to be passed from person to person than the original virus. In fact, the latest science indicates that even vaccinated individuals may be able to transmit the virus. For this reason, we are again recommending the wearing of masks when indoors or in crowded settings, especially when you do not know the vaccination status of those around you.

The good news is that the COVID vaccines are very effective against the transmission of the virus, and even more effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. The health department strongly encourages all eligible individuals aged 12 and over to get vaccinated! It is our best defense against this deadly virus. The [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) has recently recommended a [third dose for some immunocompromised individuals](#). If you think you may be eligible, please speak to your healthcare provider. Booster doses for others may be recommended in the future. The health department hopes to be able to offer vaccinations at fixed facilities in the very near future. If you are interested in hosting a vaccination clinic at your site, please contact us. If you are looking to get a COVID vaccine now, please visit <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/finder> for a convenient location.

If you have any questions or concerns about COVID-19, please contact the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission at 732-968-5151 or by email at mbrhc@middlebrookhealth.org. We are happy to hear from you and will try to answer your questions, though please understand that the situation and available information are constantly changing so we may not have all the answers.



SPOTTED LANTERN FLIES

The health department has been receiving several inquiries about the pretty yet dreaded spotted lantern fly. This invasive insect is not harmful to humans and does not bite, but it is an agricultural threat and life. It is therefore the NJ Department of Agriculture has been taking steps to control you find spotted lantern flies, the Department of Agriculture recommends killing them. However, there is currently not a pesticide that has been approved for use on these bugs, so squashing them is suggested.



You can also report sightings of the bug to <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/pests-diseases/spotted-lanternfly/>.

MIDDLE-BROOK REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION WEBSITE

The Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission has updated its website. Much of the old information has remained, but in a much more manageable format. In addition, the site now features new items such as:

- Regular updates and announcements on local health issues and service offerings
- Restaurant and food establishment inspection results with a copy of the latest inspection report available for review
- Healthy living information including tips, healthy recipes and local active living resources
- Links to our member communities and to various other health resources

We will also be adding current events to our social media platforms. Please check back frequently and let us know what you think is good and what is missing!

FLU SEASON MEANS FLU SHOTS ARE NEEDED

Although we are consumed by COVID-19, it is very important to remember to get your annual flu vaccine! The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone over six months of age get a flu vaccine each year, but it is especially important that certain people get vaccinated either because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications, or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications.

For example, the following groups are at particular risk:

- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
 - Health care workers
 - Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
 - Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)



Protect yourself! Get your shots!

RABIES CLINICS

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission is offering several free rabies clinics this fall for our cat and dog owners whose pets are at least 6 months of age.

Our schedule is as follows:

- November 6, 2021
9:00 am to 10:00 am
Green Brook Town Hall
- November 20, 2021
9:00 am to 10:30 am
FINDERNE Firehouse
- December 4, 2021
9:00 am to 10:00 am
WATCHUNG Firehouse



Due to the uncertainty around COVID-19 and the potential needs of our communities, residents are asked to call the Health Commission at 732-968-5151 to confirm the dates, times and locations. At the clinics all cats must be held in a carrier and all dogs must be leashed.

RABIES

Rabies is caused by a virus that can infect both people and animals. It is virtually always fatal. While the majority of rabies cases in the state have been in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, and foxes, cats are also a relatively common victim of rabies. These cases can pose a significant threat to unvaccinated domestic animals, which can contract the virus from wild animals and transmit the infection to humans.

In addition, residents are reminded to take these rabies prevention measures:

- Immediately report a bite from a wild or domestic animal to the health department (*so post-exposure treatment can begin immediately if needed*)
- Immediately report any wild animal showing signs of unusual behavior
- Be sure all family pets and agricultural animals are up to date on their rabies vaccinations
- Animal-proof home and yard
- Do not feed or handle wild animals
- Avoid contact with stray animals or pets other than your own
- Try to prevent your pets from coming into contact with wild animals
- Screen off vents to attics and other areas that could provide shelter
- Call the health department if you find a bat in your home
- License your pets