Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

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February Newsletter 2025

Latest in Public Health and Upcoming Events

Eating for Cancer Prevention (colorectal health) with Rutgers Cancer Institute at Warren Court. Join us Wednesday, March 12 at 1pm at the Warren Court Room to learn which foods can improve your health while protecting your body from cancer. Registration is requested. To register, click here. Call 732-968-1023 x 6681 or email adominguez@middlebrookhealth.org if you have any questions.

FREE radon test kits are now available on a first come first serve basis. Residents of Bridgewater, Green Brook, Warren, and Watchung can visit their municipal building to receive a test kit. You can't see, smell or test radon gas. Exposure to radon is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer. For more information, click here.

Do your part and stop the spread! Sick of the flu season? Continue to practice proper hand hygiene, stay home when sick, take steps to improve air quality, get tested and seek treatment when feeling sick. Don't forget to stay up to date with immunizations! For more information, visit: nj.gov/health/respiratory-viruses/.

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Heart Health

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Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Most middle-aged and young adults have one or more risk factors for heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or being a smoker or overweight. Having multiple risk factors increases your risk of heart disease. The good news is that there's a lot we can do to prevent it.

Connecting with Others is Good for Your Heart. Research shows that people with close relationships at home, work, or in their community tend to be healthier and live longer. One reason, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), is that we're more successful at meeting our health goals when we work on them with others.

Feeling connected with others and having positive, close relationships benefit our overall health, including our blood pressure and weight. Having people in our lives who motivate and care for us helps, as do feelings of closeness and companionship.

Move More. Invite family, friends, colleagues, or members of your community to join you in your efforts to be more physically active:

- Ask a colleague to walk "with you" regularly, put the date on both your calendars, and text or call to make sure you both get out for a walk.
- Get a friend or family member to sign up for the same online exercise class, such as a dance class. Make it a regular date!
- Grab your kids, put on music, and do jumping jacks, skip rope, or dance in your living room or yard.

How much is enough? Aim for at least 2½ hours of physical activity each week — that's just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. In addition, do muscle-strengthening exercises 2 days a week. Can't carve out a lot of time in your day? Try doing 10 minutes of physical activity at least three times a day. NHLBI's Move More fact sheet has ideas to get and keep you moving.

Manage Stress. Managing stress helps your heart health. Set goals with a friend or family member to do a relaxing activity every day, like walking, yoga, or meditation, or participate in an online stress-management program together. Physical activity also helps reduce stress. Talk to a qualified mental health provider or someone else you trust.

Teen Dating Violence

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February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM). This month we raise awareness to stop dating abuse before it starts. 1 in 10 high school students experienced physical violence from a dating partner in the last year. Read more about TDVAM here.

What is dating abuse?

Dating abuse is a pattern of destructive behaviors that exert power and control over a dating partner. While we define dating violence as a pattern, that does not mean the first instance of abuse is not dating violence. It just recognizes that dating violence usually involves a series of abusive behaviors over time. Abuse can take many forms including physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, financial, digital, and stalking.

Respect in a relationship.

You can show respect in your relationship in three important ways:

1. **Respect boundaries.** Boundaries help define what you are comfortable with and how you want to be treated by others. They allow you to honor your needs, goals, feelings and values.
2. **Respect levels of consent.** Healthy relationships allow partners to communicate openly and to agree on what activities they want to pursue. Whether it is holding hands, kissing, touching, sex, or anything else, it is important for all partners in a relationship to feel comfortable with what is happening every time. Consent should be clear, enthusiastic, and freely given.
3. **Engage in respectful communication.** You should be able to voice your concerns and needs without fear of harming the relationship. Speak your truth respectfully and listen to your partners point of view.

As a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, love is respect offers 24/7 information, support, and advocacy to young people between the ages of 13 and 26 who have questions or concerns about their romantic relationships:

Call
1-866-331-9474

Chat
loveisrespect.org

Text
Text "LOVEIS" to 22522

Get free, confidential support, 24/7.

Preparedness Corner

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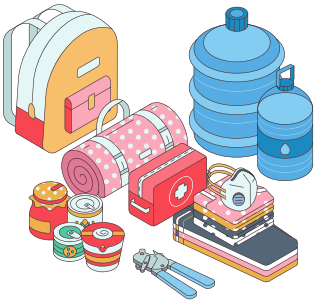

Are You Ready?

Emergencies can happen without warning, and being prepared can make a world of a difference in how we respond and recover. Whether it is a natural disaster, a health crisis, or need of sudden evacuation, having a plan and being prepared can help reduce stress and ensure safety during unexpected events.

That is why having an emergency "go-kit" is an essential component of preparedness. A "Go-Kit" is a collection of basic items you need in the event of an emergency, and most items are already found inside the home. Gather a minimum of a three-day supply of essential items:

- ☑ Water (minimum 3-day supply for drinking and sanitation, one gallon/ person / day)
- ☑ Food (3 day minimum, non-perishable, easy to prepare)
  - Consider dietary items for infants and those with food allergies
  - Include a manual can opener, paper/plastic eating ware, paper towels
- ☑ Flashlights, batteries, matches, fire extinguisher
- ☑ Battery-powered or hand crank radio
- ☑ First Aid kit, face masks, and sanitizer
- ☑ Prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, lens solution
- ☑ Vitamins, supplements, non prescription medications (pain relievers, antacids, anti-diarrhea, laxatives)
- ☑ Disinfecting wipes, soap, feminine supplies, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal hygiene and sanitation)
- ☑ Diapers, wipes, rash cream, stuffed animals, books, activities, paper, writing utensils
- ☑ Sleeping bags/warm blankets, extra clothes and shoes for each person
- ☑ Important family documents (ID's, insurance policies, bank account records) either saved electronically or in a waterproof container
- ★ Store in a cool, dry, designated place easily accessible to all family members. Replace expired items as needed and update as family's needs.

Starting your preparedness journey can be stressful. We are here to help you through the process. We encourage you to visit our emergency preparedness page on our website. Scan the QR code or visit: middlebrookhealth.org/resident/emergency-preparedness.

Recipe of the Month

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SAUTÉED & STEAMED COLLARDS

Ingredients

- 16 cups chopped collards (small leaves)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 large garlic cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon hot pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon salt-free seasoning

Makes 8 servings

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Cut bottom stems from collards.
3. Wash and cut collards into bite-sized pieces. Place in colander to drain.
4. Chop garlic cloves into small pieces.
5. Place olive oil into large skillet. Place on high heat to start.
6. Place collards in skillet. Keep on high heat, turning collards as they saute, about 1 minute in the uncovered skillet. (You will not need to add water because of the water already on the washed collards.)
7. Add garlic cloves and red pepper flakes.
8. Place cover on the skillet to allow collards to steam until they are half their original volume.
9. Turn heat to low and continue steaming until the collards are tender.

For more recipes, visit: myplate.gov