

the

Health Source

A newsletter from the Middletown Health Department in collaboration with the Monmouth Public Health Consortium (MPHC)*



Syphilis is on the rise: What you need to know

A disease that once ravaged Medieval Europe and was treated with mercury, often to disastrous effect, is again on the rise. That disease is syphilis - but fortunately, treatment no longer involves mercury, and if you're armed with the right knowledge it's not a major threat.

There are a number of possible reasons for the uptick in syphilis cases, including cuts to funding for sexually transmitted disease (STDs) prevention and treatment, and a suspected increase in risky sexual behavior. But whatever the cause, syphilis cases in the United States rose by 17.7% from 2014 to 2015 to nearly 75,000 total cases. In Monmouth County, 49 cases of syphilis were reported in 2016, up from 41 in 2015.

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Save the Date!

World Stroke Day

October 29

Stroke is the #2 cause of death in the world. Most strokes are preventable.

Great American Smokeout

November 16

Encourages smokers to quit or to use the day to make a quit plan.

National Influenza Vaccination Week

December 3-9

Campaign to decrease the number of flu cases and deaths from flu illness.

Raising the age to 21

As of November 1, 2017, the legal age to purchase tobacco products in New Jersey is 21 years. Those products include electronic cigarettes also known as e-cigs and hookahs.

New Jersey is the third state in the growing trend to raise the minimum age to purchase tobacco products. The new law applies to anyone who sells, gives or offers tobacco products to another whom is younger than age 21.

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the US. The Centers for Disease Control estimates it claims over 480,000 per year.



Hand washing prevents the flu!

With flu season on the horizon, hand washing becomes even more important

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flu season strikes the United States every year during the fall and winter months. The peak of flu season can come anytime between November and March - you'll know it's arrived when almost everyone you come across at work, at school, and around town is coughing and sneezing.

Preventing the flu

There are a few things that can be done to prevent the spread of the flu and to prevent yourself from coming down with it, and one of the biggest is a simple practice that should already be part of your routine.

Properly washing your hands, the CDC says, is like a "do-it-yourself vaccine" in that it can help stop the spread of germs that lead to respiratory illnesses like the flu. The CDC recommends a five-step process: wet, lather, scrub, rinse, and dry. You can use warm or cold water, but it's important to lather thoroughly and scrub for around 20 seconds - or the time it takes to hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice over. Then rinse well and dry with a clean towel or hand dryer.

When a full hand washing isn't possible, hand sanitizers are an effective alternative - but they don't work as well when the hands are visibly dirty or grimy. Look for a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, as this level quickly reduces the amount of germs present on the hands. However, sanitizers do not eliminate all germs or remove all harmful substances, so regular hand washing is still recommended.

Hand washing is an easy habit that can be a big help. Wash up before, during, and after preparing food and eating, after using the toilet, after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, after touching a trash can, and in many other everyday situations. In short - when in doubt, wash your hands.



How to properly wash

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn on the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.





Keep food safe and healthy during the holidays

Thanksgiving is right around the corner, but with the holiday season comes lots of cooking, eating and celebrating with family and friends. It's a fun time of year, but with the cooling weather, the high volume of travel, and all that food being prepared, it's also a situation ripe for the spread of illness.

An easy way to cut down on germ exposure on Thanksgiving and beyond is to stick to a few good habits in the kitchen. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 6 Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year. Certain types of food are particularly susceptible to spreading germs, and one of the biggest culprits on the list is the classic Thanksgiving centerpiece. Raw poultry, including turkey, frequently carries *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, and other bacteria.

In order to ensure your holiday turkey tastes great and doesn't leave anyone on your guest list with a nasty bug, the CDC recommends a few precautions. First, never thaw your turkey on the counter - always leave it to thaw in the fridge, in a sink full of cold water (changed every 30 minutes) or in the microwave. If you stuff your turkey, do so immediately before cooking. Make sure to cook your turkey at a temperature of no less than 325°F - cooking time will vary by the weight of the bird, but ensure the internal temperature reaches at least 165°F before serving.

Turkey is a great menu item to focus on for food safety, but it's not the only part of the feast to watch out for. Almost any type of food can spread germs if not handled properly. The CDC outlines four steps to food safety to always practice in the kitchen to minimize your risk: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

"Clean" means to wash your hands and prep surfaces frequently. "Separate" is a reminder not to cross-contaminate - always use freshly cleaned cutting boards, knives, and countertops for different types of ingredients. Make sure to "cook" to the proper temperature to kill germs. Measure with an internal thermometer. A general guideline: 145°F for cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb; 160°F for ground meats; 165°F for all poultry (including ground poultry); and 165°F for all leftovers and casseroles. Finally, "chill" by refrigerating properly. Keep your fridge below 40°F, and refrigerate perishable food as soon as possible - within 2 hours, at the most. Always thaw frozen food safely, in the fridge.

Eating great food with your friends and family is one of the best parts of Thanksgiving - follow these simple guidelines to ensure it stays happy and healthy.

Syphilis on the rise, cont'd

How is syphilis spread?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that syphilis is spread by contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be spread from a mother to her newborn during pregnancy.



How can I lower my risk of getting syphilis?

Preventing the contraction of syphilis is, of course, the best case scenario. According to the CDC, the only way to eliminate the possibility of contracting syphilis is to not have sex. However, properly using condoms and maintaining long-term, monogamous relationships is also very effective.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Syphilis is divided into four stages: primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary. Primary syphilis is typically characterized by a sore or sores, which are often painless, at the site of the original infection (usually the genitals, anus, or mouth). As syphilis advances into the secondary stage, skin rashes, swelling in the lymph nodes, and fever may develop. There are no signs or symptoms during the latent stage, but the tertiary stage, the most advanced form of syphilis, is associated with severe medical problems. It can affect the heart, brain, and other organs, and can be diagnosed by a doctor.

Can I get tested?

If you do experience symptoms, your healthcare provider can test to confirm if you have a case of syphilis. In Monmouth County, syphilis tests can be run at the local hospitals (Monmouth Medical Center and the Jersey Shore University Medical Center). According to the CDC, syphilis can be cured with antibiotics. However, treatment may not reverse any scarring and damage already caused by the disease. Contracting and treating the disease once does not prevent future cases.

Syphilis can also cause complications during pregnancy. Syphilis can lead to low birth weights, premature births, and stillbirths. The CDC recommends all expecting mothers be tested at least once for syphilis during pregnancy, and to seek immediate treatment if the test is positive.

REALLY?!!
(THAT HAS TO BE A MISTAKE, RIGHT?)

1 IN 2 Will Get an STD by Age 25 if Sexually Active.

Get #TeSTD

GYT
Get Yourself Tested

gettested.cdc.gov
800-624-2377

NJ Health
New Jersey Department of Health

f t

Prepare for Winter Weather

Winter storms and cold temperatures can be hazardous. Stay safe and healthy by planning ahead. Take these steps to keep your home safe and warm during the winter months.

- Have your heating system serviced professionally to make sure that it is clean, working properly, and ventilated to the outside.
- Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys.
- Install a smoke detector. Test batteries monthly and replace them twice a year.
- Have a safe alternate heating source and alternate fuels available.



- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) emergencies.
 - Install a CO detector to alert you of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas. Check batteries when you change your clocks in the fall and spring.
 - Learn symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Public Health Consortium* Rabies Clinics

Wednesday Nov. 1, 2017 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Fair Haven Firehouse 645 River Road Fair Haven, NJ
Thursday Nov. 2, 2017 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Rumson Public Works Garage 80 East River Road Rumson, NJ
Saturday Nov. 4 2017 10:00 am – 11:00 am	Spring Lake Heights Firehouse 700 Sixth Avenue Spring Lake Heights
Saturday Nov. 4 2017 9:30 am – 11:00 am	Manalapan Recreation Center Field K Building Route 522 and Taylors Mills Road Call 732-446-8345
Monday Nov. 13, 2017 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	WLB Chemical & Truck Co. #1 379 Monmouth Road West Long Branch, NJ
Wednesday Nov. 15, 2017 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Little Silver Firehouse 543 Prospect Avenue Little Silver, NJ
Thursday Nov. 16, 2017 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Highlands Firehouse 17-1 Shore Drive Highlands, NJ
Saturday Nov. 18, 2017 10:00 am – 11:30 am	Shrewsbury Hose Company No. 1 783 Broad Street Shrewsbury, NJ
Saturday Jan. 6, 2018	Long Branch - location TBD Call 732-571-5665
Saturday Jan. 6, 2018 10:00 am – 12 noon	Tinton Falls Municipal Complex DPW Building 556 Tinton Avenue
Tuesday Jan. 9, 2018 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Brielle Fire Hall 509 Longstreet Avenue Brielle, NJ
Saturday Jan. 13, 2018	Colts Neck - location TBD Call 732-462-5470
Saturday Jan. 20, 2018	Middletown Township Croydon Hall Gym 900 Leonardville Road Leonardo, NJ Call 732-615-2095
Saturday Jan. 20, 2018 8:00 am – 11:00 am	Freehold, Michael J. Tighe Park 65 Georgia Road Freehold, NJ Call 732-294-2060

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Want to get all the latest public health news and alerts.
Visit our website at <http://www.middlestownnj.org/>.



The Middletown Health Department

180 Main Street,
Port Monmouth, NJ 07758
732-615-2095

*The following local health departments form the Monmouth Public Health Consortium:

Colts Neck - Thomas Frank, HO

Freehold - Margaret Jahn, HO

Long Branch – Sidney Johnson, HO

Manalapan - W. David Richardson, HO

Middletown – Rich DeBenedetto, Health Director

^Monmouth County Regional Health Commission No. 1 – David Henry, HO

^There are sixteen (16) member towns, participating in the Monmouth County Regional Health Commission No. 1: Brielle, Fair Haven, Highlands, Little Silver, Monmouth Beach, Ocean Township, Red Bank, Rumson, Sea Bright, Sea Girt, Shrewsbury, Spring Lake, Spring Lake Heights, Tinton Falls, Wall Township and West Long Branch. The Commission also currently provides contract services to the following municipalities: Allenhurst, Deal, Interlaken, Middletown and Loch Arbour.