The Morris-Somerset Regional Chronic Disease Coalition (RCDC) is working hard to increase awareness for colon cancer. RCDC encourages residents to get screened and incorporate a healthy diet to reduce their risk of developing colon cancer.

**Get Screened**

Regular screening, beginning at age 50, is the key to preventing colorectal cancer. Experts recommend that adults age 50 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer, and that adults age 76 to 85 ask their doctor if they should be screened. Screening tests can find growths in the colon and rectum, so that they can be removed before they can become cancerous. These tests can also find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best. Speak with your doctor about when you should begin screening and how often you should be tested.

**Learn the Signs and Symptoms**

Colorectal cancer doesn’t always cause symptoms, especially at first. If you have symptoms, they may include:
- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement)
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps that don’t go away
- Losing weight and you don’t know why

**Know Your Risk & Family History**

Your risk of getting colorectal cancer increases as you get older. People over age 50 have the highest risk of colorectal cancer. You may also be at higher risk if you are African American, smoke, or have a family history of colorectal cancer. Lifestyle factors may also contribute to an increased risk of colorectal cancer, and include:
- Lack of regular physical activity
- A diet low in fruit and vegetables
- A low-fiber and high-fat diet
- Overweight and obesity
- Alcohol consumption
- Tobacco use

**What You Can Do**

- Get screened starting at age 50.
- Encourage your family members and friends over age 50 to get screened.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Get plenty of physical activity and eat healthy.

**SCDOH in Action!**

RCDC has developed a calendar to recognize Colorectal Cancer Month. This interactive web calendar provides easy links to other informational resources.

RCDC and its partners have taken the pledge to help increase colorectal cancer screening rates by supporting the “80% by 2018” initiative, led by the American Cancer Society (ACS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (an organization co-founded by the ACS and CDC). The pledge is a shared goal to have 80% of adults age 50 and above regularly screened for colorectal cancer by 2018. Achieving this goal would prevent 277,000 cases of colorectal cancer and 203,000 deaths by 2030. To be part of this initiative, you can take the pledge at [http://bit.ly/PledgeColonC](http://bit.ly/PledgeColonC)

For more information on the RCDC, visit: [https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health/RCDC/index.aspx](https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health/RCDC/index.aspx)

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What is a pesticide?

A pesticide is a chemical that is used to prevent, kill or repel pests. These pests can be insects, mice and other animals, weeds and even some germs! Some examples of pesticides are bug repellent, pet flea & tick treatments, algae killer for pools and fish tanks, bathroom mold removal agents, and weed killers.

How do I use pesticides safely?

Using pesticides safely depends on many things. Some of the most important factors include selecting the appropriate product, and using that product according to the label directions. The label directions are written to minimize the risk of problems and to define the legal uses for the product.

In addition to reading and following the label instructions, some tips to consider when using pesticides:

- Make sure kids, pets, and anyone non-essential to the application is out of the area before mixing and applying pesticides.
- Wear clothing that will protect you when using pesticides (i.e. long sleeve shirt, long pants, and closed-toe shoes in addition to any other protective clothing or equipment required by the label)
- Mix pesticides outdoors or in well-ventilated areas. Mix only what you need to use in the short term to avoid storing or disposing of extra pesticide.
- Be prepared for a pesticide spill. Have paper towels, sawdust or kitty litter, garbage bags, and non-absorbent gloves on hand to contain the spill. Avoid using excessive amounts of water, as this may only spread the pesticide and could be harmful to the environment.
- Read the first aid instructions on the label before using the product. Have the telephone number for the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) available in case you have additional questions.
- Remove personal items, such as toys, clothing, or tools from the spray area to avoid contamination.
- When spraying pesticides indoors, make sure the product is approved for indoor use and that the area is well ventilated.
- When applying pesticides as a spray or dust outside, avoid windy conditions and close the doors and windows to your home.
- After using pesticides, wash your hands especially before smoking or eating.

When not used properly, pesticides can harm people, pets, and the environment.
- Never put pesticides in drinking cups or bottles. Clearly label anything that contains a pesticide.
- Never mix different household pesticides together unless directed to do so by the label.
- When adding water to pesticides, never use spoons or cups that you use for food.

Resources!


Protect your Health: Read the Label [http://npic.orst.edu/outreach/labelinfographic.pdf](http://npic.orst.edu/outreach/labelinfographic.pdf)

Disinfectants in Schools: [http://npic.orst.edu/outreach/](http://npic.orst.edu/outreach/)
Finally getting outside after a long winter has folks looking forward to enjoying the great outdoors. Springtime is a great opportunity to clean up and prepare for spring and summer activities without the annoyance of ticks and mosquitoes. Both ticks and mosquitoes survive by eating blood from animals or people, and could cause disease by doing this. So reducing ticks and mosquitoes around your home can help you stay healthy as well as allowing you to enjoy being outdoors in nice weather. You can reduce the population of mosquitoes in your neighborhood with some simple techniques that **Fight the Bite!**

### Remove standing water where mosquitoes could lay eggs.
Mosquitoes can hatch in a week or less, in as little as a half inch of water.

✓ Empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as buckets, flower pots, pet dishes, children’s toys and other items at least weekly. Check your yard now and after every rain to remove standing water

✓ Unmaintained pools – including children’s wading pools – are also common sources. For pools, clean and chlorinate even when not in use.

### Tires are the most common mosquito breeding ground in the country.
If tires are used for decoration or swing sets, drill holes in the bottom for drainage. If tires are no longer useful, discard during Somerset County Tire Recycling Days, [http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-works/recycling/tire-recycling](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-works/recycling/tire-recycling)

### Maintain your yard
✓ Mow and weed as often as necessary to keep grass and nuisance plants from becoming too high.

✓ Removing leaf accumulations and trimming bushes and plants not only makes neighborhoods more attractive, it also reduces homes and hiding places for unwanted creatures.

✓ Remove old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yards as these may give ticks a place to hide. **Keep an eye out for junk collection days to get rid of unwanted yard debris and materials**

### Around the house, install and maintain doors and windows.
Assure that screens are tight fitting and without holes. Observe your rain gutters drains– are they in good repair and clear of leaves and other debris?

Taking care of your yard and property is not only a good thing to do from a community perspective; it also will provide a safer place for you and your family to live.

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**SCDOH in Action!**
SCDOH will be launching the 2017 **Fight the Bite!** in the spring, providing residents with tools and resources that can help them to protect themselves and families from mosquito bites.

For more information on our **Fight the Bite!** program, visit our website at: [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health)

In recognition of Groundwater Awareness Week, the Somerset County Department of Health wants to remind homeowners with private wells about the importance of regularly testing their drinking water.

Clean water is one of the world’s most precious resources. People use water every day for a variety of reasons, such as drinking, bathing, recreation, agriculture, cooling, industry, and medical uses. Although water plays an essential role in every person’s life, many individuals are not aware that much of their water comes from the ground.

**What is groundwater?**

Groundwater is water that is located below the surface of the earth in spaces between rock and soil. Groundwater supplies water to wells and springs and is a substantial source of water used in the United States. Thirty percent of all available freshwater comes from groundwater, which supplies a significant amount of water to community water systems and private wells.

**Why is groundwater important?**

People who have wells use groundwater for drinking water. Also, most groundwater flows directly into streams, rivers, and lakes from beneath. Most of the time, groundwater sources in the United States are safe to use and not a cause for worry. However, groundwater sources can become contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, and chemicals that can lead to sickness and disease.

**How can you protect it?**

Wells can provide high-quality drinking water, and about half the U.S. population receives drinking water from private wells, but with well ownership comes the responsibility of ongoing maintenance. Here are some simple practices you can take to protect your water supply:

- Check visible parts of your well system for cracks or leaks. Just as you check your furnace or smoke detector batteries seasonally, spring is a good season to have an annual water well checkup before the peak water use season begins.
- Maintain your septic system, have it inspected and serviced regularly.
- Avoid mixing and using pesticides, fertilizers or other chemicals near your wellhead.
- Avoid flushing chemicals down the drains, especially if your home also uses a private septic system.

Inspection checklists and info on maintaining a private well safely are available at [www.wellowner.org](http://www.wellowner.org).

**Well Testing Information**

Somerset County residents have several options for well testing: Sampling kits for bacteria are available year-round at the Bridgewater Township Health Department, 100 Commons Way in Bridgewater. For information, call 908-725-5750. Residents can purchase discounted test kits for other contaminants, such as arsenic, lead or volatile organic compounds, through the Raritan Headwaters Association. The RHA offers individual well-testing options and will be hosting several community events this spring for New Jersey residents. For a listing of dates and locations, go to [www.testmywell.org](http://www.testmywell.org) or call the Well Testing Office at 908-234-1852. Homeowners also may opt to hire a private lab. For a list of certified water-testing laboratories, visit the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection website at [http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/oqa/certlabs.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/oqa/certlabs.htm).

For more information on recommended well testing for your area, please contact your local health department. A directory of local health departments and additional safe drinking water information can be found on our website at [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health).
April Health Observances

Bridging Health Equity Across Communities

Did you know that your zip code can be a predictor of your health? So can your place of birth, where you work and play, your income and education, and a host of other factors – in addition to the choices you make each day about what to eat, when to work out and whether or not to see a doctor. These factors, recognized by public health professionals as “social determinants of health,” are linked to inequities in health and health care (health disparities) among racial and ethnic minorities in America.

During National Minority Health Month each April, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) leads the nation in raising awareness about health disparities, their causes and the impact they have on minority communities and on the nation as whole.

Every community deserves good health. Everyone can join OMH and its federal, state, tribal and local community partners during April and throughout 2017, in bridging health equity across communities.

For more information on National Minority Health Month and how you can get involved, visit https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/.

SCDOH in Action!

Somerset County is home to people from many cultures, races and ethnic groups. SCDOH is committed to helping people in these diverse communities live longer, healthier lives and to leading the effort to reduce, and eventually eliminate health disparities in Somerset County. SCDOH partners with Healthier Somerset throughout the year on initiatives to improve the health and well-being of everyone who lives and works in Somerset County. The goals of the coalition are to, 1) engage Somerset County in active participation in good health habits; 2) increase access to choices that promote healthy lifestyles, and 3) promote policy changes that improve health.

National Public Health Week

During the first full week of April, SCDOH will join public health partners to recognize National Public Health Week as a time to highlight issues that are important to improving our nation. We encourage others to become part of a growing movement to create the healthiest nation in one generation!

Changing our health means ensuring conditions where everyone has the opportunity to be healthy. Everyone has a role in this:

• Build a nation of safe, healthy communities
• Help all Americans achieve at least high school graduation
• Increase economic mobility
• Ensure social justice and health equity
• Give everyone a choice of safe, healthy food
• Prepare for the health effects of climate change
• Encourage healthy behaviors and choices
• Provide quality health care for everyone
• Strengthen public health infrastructure and capacity

SCDOH in Action!

SCDOH is dedicated to fostering healthy lifestyles and a safe environment through effective leadership in public health, comprehensive planning, development of proactive community partnerships and a continued commitment to public health service.
National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and to celebrate the achievements of immunization programs in promoting healthy communities throughout the United States.

Parents agree that feeding and sleep schedules are important to help keep their children healthy. The same goes for childhood immunizations. Vaccinating children on time is the best way to protect them against 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before their second birthday.

The recommended immunization schedule is designed to protect babies early in life, when they are vulnerable and before it’s likely that they will be exposed to diseases. Public health and medical experts base their vaccine recommendations on many factors. They study information about diseases and vaccines very carefully to decide which vaccines kids should get and when they should get them for best protection.

Although the number of vaccines a child needs in the first two years may seem like a lot, doctors know a great deal about the human immune system, and they know that a healthy baby’s immune system can handle getting all vaccines when they are recommended. When parents choose not to vaccinate or to follow a delayed schedule, children are left unprotected against diseases that still circulate in this country, like measles and whooping cough. Since 2010, we have seen between 10,000 and 50,000 cases of whooping cough each year in the United States. And, up to 20 babies die from whooping cough each year in the United States. Most whooping cough deaths are among babies who are too young to be protected by their own vaccination.

The United States experienced a record number of measles cases during 2014, with 667 cases from 27 states reported to CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD). This was the greatest number of cases in the U.S. since measles was previously eliminated in 2000. Staying on track with the immunization schedule ensures that children have the best protection against diseases like these by age 2.

Parents who are concerned about the number of shots given at one time can reduce the number given at a visit by using the flexibility built into the recommended immunization schedule. For example, the third dose of hepatitis B vaccine can be given at 6 through 18 months of age. Parents can work with their child’s healthcare professional to have their child get this dose at any time during that age range.

Getting children all the vaccines they need by age two is one of the best things parents can do to help keep their children safe and healthy. If you have questions about the childhood immunization schedule, talk with your child’s doctor or nurse. For more information about vaccines, go to www.cdc.gov/vaccines/patients.

Resources!

2017 Immunization schedules
Check the schedule for the age or age range when each vaccine or series of shots is recommended:
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/index.html

Travel and vaccines
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/travel-vaccines.html

Tips for your child’s next shot appointment
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/less-stressful.html
Health Observances

March

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
#Standup2coloncancer

March 5-11
National Groundwater Awareness Week
#NationalGroundwaterAwarenessWeek

March 19-25
National Poison Prevention Week
#NPPW17
#preventpoison

April

National Minority Health Month
#NMHM

April 3-9
National Public Health Week
#NPHW

April 22-29
National Infant Immunization Week
#NIIW

March 14 RCDC invites you to attend:
Free Program—“Be a Fiber Prescriber to Prevent Colon Cancer”
Steeplechase Cancer Center—Somerville
11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
A high fiber lunch will follow.
To register: call 1-888-637-9584

March 23 RCDC invites you to attend:
Free Program—“Curing Colorectal Cancer through Early Detection and Screening”
Morristown Medical Center Health Pavilion—Rockaway
6:00 p.m. Refreshments, Program begins at 6:30 p.m.
To register call: 973-971-6581

March 29 RCDC invites you to attend:
Free Program—“Curing Colorectal Cancer through Early Detection and Screening”
Bernards Township Municipal Building, Basking Ridge
6:30 p.m. Refreshments, Program starts at 7:00 p.m.
To register 908-204-2520 or health@bernards.org

April 3-8 National County Government Month
Fight-the-Bite! Information will be available from SCDOH
Bridgewater Library —1 Vogt Drive, Bridgewater, NJ

LINCS Notifications

Somerset County participates in the Public Health Emergency Notification System (PHENS) and the Local Information Network Communications System (LINCS) for notices on urgent health threats. Interested? Sign up here or visit www.co.somerset.nj.us/health.

Follow us!

Follow us on Twitter!
https://twitter.com/schealthdept

Like us on Facebook!
https://www.facebook.com/SomersetCountyNJ

For more information visit our website: www.co.somerset.nj.us/health