



March

2025

# Westfield Regional Health Department

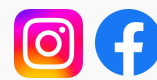
## Your Health Matters

### Monthly Newsletter

Proudly serving Chatham Borough, Fanwood, Garwood, Madison, Mountainside, New Providence, Roselle Park, Summit, and Westfield



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## 1 Prioritizing Women's Health in March and Beyond

Women's health is a cornerstone of public health, as women often serve as caregivers and decision-makers in family health. During Women's History Month, we encourage all women to prioritize their well-being by focusing on preventive care, mental health, and community support.

Regular health screenings are essential in preventing diseases and catching health issues early.

- Mammograms (age 40 or earlier with risk factors)
- Pap smears and HPV tests (age 21)
- Heart health screenings (blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels)
- Bone density tests (postmenopausal women)
- Colorectal cancer screenings (age 45)

As women are at a higher risk for anxiety and depression, we emphasize the importance of:

- Seeking support through therapy, counseling, or peer groups
- Practicing mindfulness, meditation, or stress-relief
- Prioritizing self-care and work-life balance
- Connecting with community programs and support networks

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## Honoring Contributions by Women to Public Health

March is Women's History Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the remarkable achievements of women throughout history.

We are proud to acknowledge the significant contributions of women in the field of public health, whose efforts have shaped medical advancements, disease prevention, and community wellness initiatives that benefit us all today.

- **Florence Nightingale** (1820–1910) – Widely regarded as the founder of modern nursing, Nightingale revolutionized hospital sanitation practices, reducing mortality rates and setting the foundation for public health nursing.
- **Dr. Virginia Apgar** (1909–1974) – A pioneering anesthesiologist, Dr. Apgar developed the Apgar Score, a vital tool still used today to assess newborn health immediately after birth.
- **Dr. Antonia Novello** (born 1944) – The first woman and first Hispanic U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Novello focused on children's health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS awareness, childhood immunizations, and reducing youth tobacco use.

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## International Women's Day is March 8



It is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

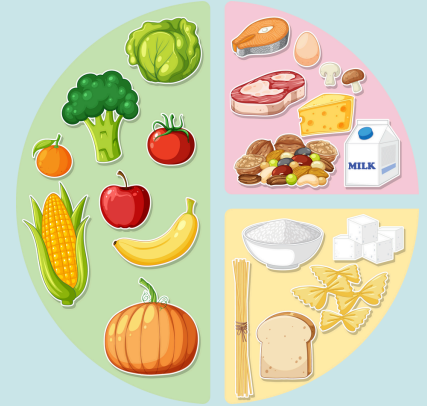
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## 2

## Celebrating National Nutrition Month Fueling Your Health

March is also National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to highlight the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. This month is a great opportunity to take a closer look at your diet and lifestyle, making small but meaningful changes that can improve your overall well-being.

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## The Power of Nutrition

Nutrition plays a vital role in maintaining good health and preventing chronic diseases. A well-balanced diet can boost your immune system, enhance brain function, and provide the energy needed for daily activities. Some key elements of a nutritious diet include:

- Eating a variety of foods – Incorporate fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats into your meals to ensure you get a range of essential nutrients.
- Staying hydrated – Water is crucial for digestion, circulation, and temperature regulation. Aim for at least 8 glasses a day.
- Portion control – Be mindful of serving sizes to avoid overeating and maintain a healthy weight.
- Limiting processed foods – Reduce intake of foods high in added sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats to promote heart and metabolic health.

## Simple Ways to Improve Your Eating Habits

### 1) Plan Your Meals

Preparing meals ahead of time can help you make healthier choices and save money.

### 2) Snack Smart

Opt for nutrient-dense snacks like nuts, yogurt, or fruit instead of processed snacks.

### 3) Read Nutrition Labels

Understanding food labels can help you make better choices at the grocery store.

### 4) Cook More at Home

Preparing meals at home allows you to control ingredients and portion sizes.

### 5) Stay Active

Pair a nutritious diet with regular physical activity for optimal health benefits.



Challenge yourself to adopt healthier habits and encourage those around you to do the same. Whether it's trying a new recipe, swapping out sugary drinks, or adding more veggies to your plate, every small step counts.

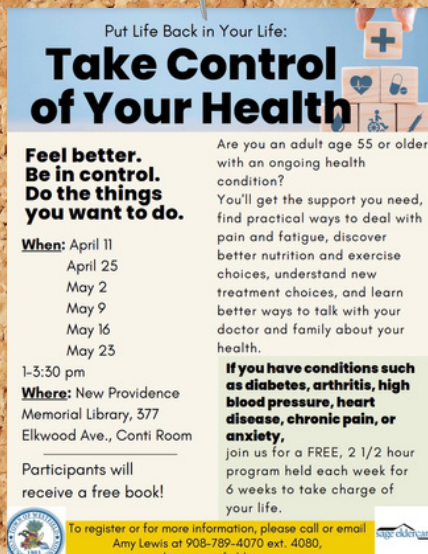
Let's make this month a time to fuel our bodies with the nutrients they need for a healthier, happier life!

# 3

## Local Upcoming Events & Awareness Days



Improve bone health and strength with Project Healthy Bones, a free 24-week exercise and education program for adults at risk for osteoporosis or osteopenia. Sessions begin Tuesday, March 11, from 1:30–3:30 PM at New Providence Presbyterian Church. To register, contact Amy Lewis at [alewis@westfieldnj.gov](mailto:alewis@westfieldnj.gov) or 908-789-4070 ext. 4080.



If you're 55+ with a chronic condition, join this free six-week program starting April 11, Thursdays from 1–3:30 PM at New Providence Memorial Library. Learn to manage symptoms, improve well-being, and receive a free book!

DON'T MISS!

### Month-Long Observances:

- [Brain Injury Awareness](#)
- [Multiple Sclerosis Awareness](#)
- [National Colorectal Cancer Awareness](#)
- [National Bleeding Disorders Awareness](#)
- [National Kidney Month](#)

### Key Days & Weeks:

- [World Hearing Day on March 3](#)
- [Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week March 9 to 15](#)
- [National Sleep Awareness Week March 9 to 15](#)
- [World Tuberculosis Day on March 24](#)
- [Wear Purple Day for Epilepsy Awareness on March 26](#)

## Bird Flu Update

While the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) is still describing the risk to humans as low, NJ public health officials are closely monitoring bird flu outbreaks nationally. As of March 1, there were none reported in NJ.

The virus, also known as avian influenza or H5N1, has spread to dozens of humans, mostly farm and dairy workers. As of Jan. 14, 2025, it has resulted in 68 diagnosed cases and one human death.

## Should I Avoid Eggs and Milk?

Not at this time according to the CDC. They recommend cooking eggs to an internal temperature of 165 degrees - yolks should be firm, and scrambled eggs should not be runny. If consuming milk products, be sure they are pasteurized.

### GUIDELINES





# 4

## Spring Allergy Awareness & Prevention

### Nip Seasonal Allergies in the Bud

Spring means flower buds and blooming trees — and if you're one of the millions of people who have seasonal allergies, it also means sneezing, congestion, a runny nose, and other bothersome symptoms. Seasonal allergies — also called hay fever and allergic rhinitis — can make you miserable. But before you settle for plastic flowers and artificial turf, try these simple strategies to keep seasonal allergies under control.

### Reduce Your Exposure to Allergy Triggers

To reduce your exposure to the things that trigger your allergy signs and symptoms (allergens):

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Avoid lawn mowing, weed pulling and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.
- Remove clothes you've worn outside and shower to rinse pollen from your skin and hair.
- Don't hang laundry outside — pollen can stick to sheets and towels.
- Wear a face mask if you do outside chores.

Source: Mayo Clinic | 2025

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### Take Extra Steps When Pollen Counts are High

Seasonal allergy signs and symptoms can flare up when there's a lot of pollen in the air. These steps can help you reduce your exposure:

- If high pollen counts are forecasted, start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start.
- Close doors and windows at night if possible or any other time when pollen counts are high.
- Use air conditioning at home or when driving in a car.
- Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen counts are highest.
- Vacuum floors often to remove pollen from carpets.
- Rinse sinuses with a saline solution.
- When home remedies are not enough, consult your health care provider.

Source: American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology | 2024

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## Recipe of the Month

### Garlicky Grilled Steak & Kale Salad

Try this easy recipe (and the 30 others) from Eating Well Magazine's "31 Healthy Dinners to Make in March."

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