



Westfield Regional Health Department

Your Health Matters

April
2025

Monthly Newsletter

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



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1 The Power of Public Health Your Health, Our Mission

Did you know that Americans today live, on average, 35 years longer than they did 150 years ago? This remarkable progress is due in large part to public health initiatives that have improved the well-being of communities across the country and around the world.

Public health is not just about individual care, it is about protecting and enhancing the health of entire communities. It influences every aspect of our daily lives, from clean air and safe food to disease prevention and emergency response. Though often working behind the scenes, public health is a constant force ensuring our safety and well-being.

Thanks to public health advancements, we've seen:

- The eradication of deadly diseases in many parts of the world
- Expanded vaccination programs protecting children and older adults
- Increased funding for critical services, including reproductive care, mental health support, and climate resilience initiatives

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an initiative of the American Public Health Association

What is National Public Health Week?

Every year, National Public Health Week (April 1 to 7) highlights the essential role public health plays in keeping communities safe and thriving. Public health extends beyond medical care and encompasses disease prevention, clean air and water access, emergency preparedness, mental health awareness, and ensuring individuals have the resources they need to lead healthier lives.

This year's theme focuses on building healthier communities through education, policy, and action.

Key topics include:

- Mental Health – Reducing stigma and expanding access to support services
- Community Health – Encouraging healthy habits and promoting local wellness programs
- Chronic Disease Prevention – Raising awareness about heart disease, diabetes, and other preventable conditions
- Environmental Health – Addressing air and water quality, climate change, and sustainability efforts

From everyday habits to community initiatives, every effort to enhance public health counts.

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Follow Us During Public Health Week

This week the WRHD will highlight mental health, disease prevention, environmental health, and more on our social media pages. Stay tuned in and be part of building a healthier community for all!



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April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Protecting Our Most Vulnerable

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about child safety and supporting families. Preventing child abuse and neglect requires a collective effort from educators, healthcare providers, community organizations, and individuals. You can help by learning the signs of abuse and neglect, supporting local child welfare organizations and speaking up when you see something concerning.

If you suspect child abuse or need resources, call the New Jersey Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873). By working together, we can protect children and strengthen families.

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World Health Day

Prioritizing Maternal & Newborn Health

Every year on April 7, World Health Day highlights a critical global health issue. In 2025, the focus will be on maternal and newborn health, recognizing that the health of mothers and babies is the foundation of strong families and thriving communities. Ensuring safe pregnancies, healthy births, and quality postnatal care leads to hopeful futures for all.

This year's campaign, "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures," will launch a year-long effort urging governments and the global health community to:

- End preventable maternal and newborn deaths by expanding access to quality healthcare
- Prioritize long-term maternal health and well-being beyond childbirth
- Improve access to essential prenatal, delivery, and postnatal services

The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners provide valuable resources to support safe pregnancies, healthy deliveries, and improved postnatal care.

This World Health Day, take the time to learn more about how communities can advocate for better healthcare for mothers and infants.

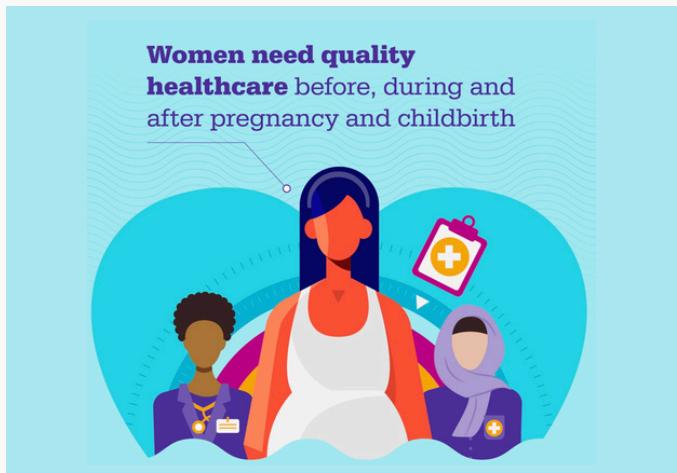


Maternal and newborn health is a shared responsibility, and every effort to improve care can save lives.

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Did You Know?

Every 7 seconds a woman or newborn baby dies, or is lost to stillbirth.



Managing Stress is Essential for Overall Health



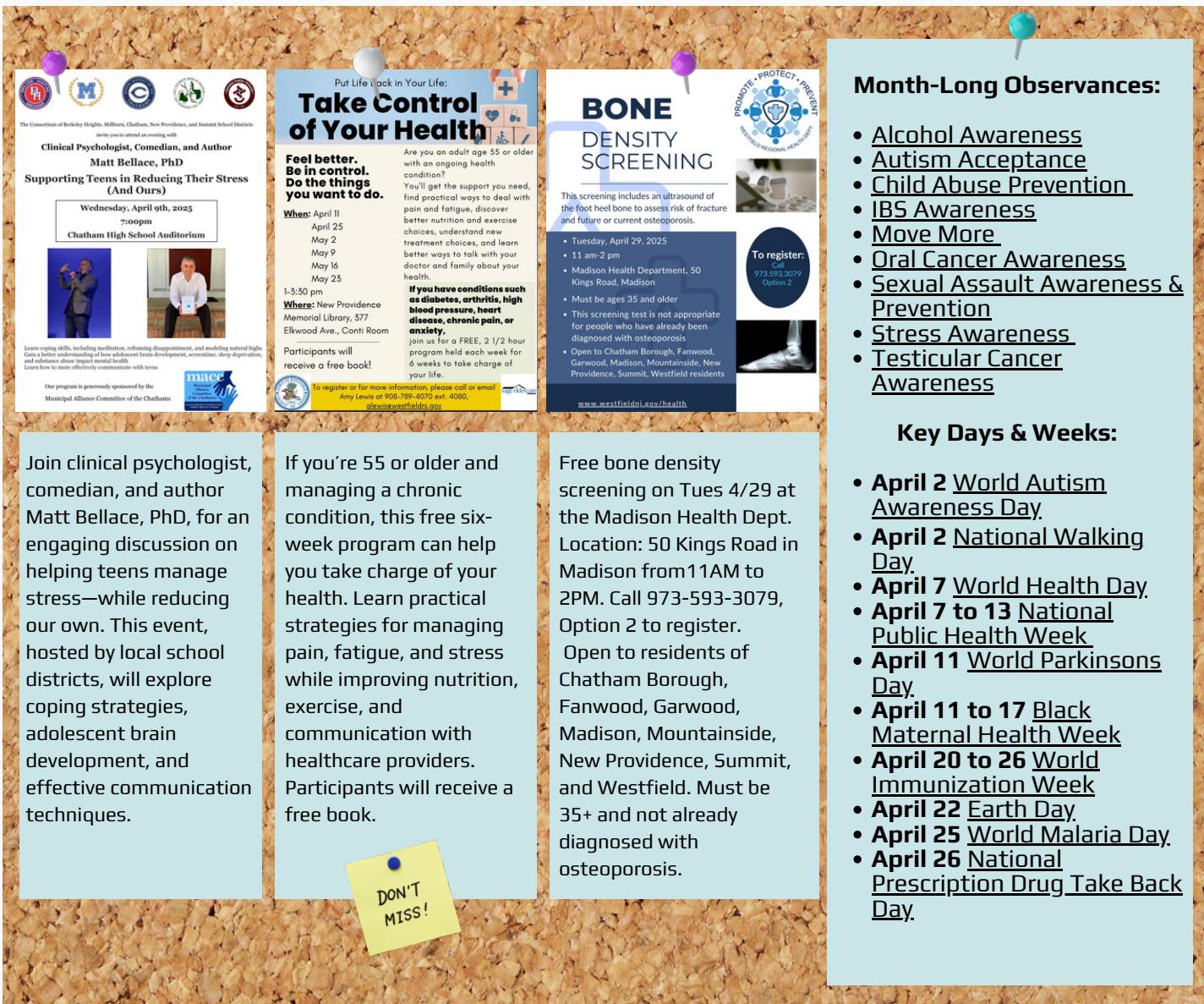
Chronic stress can contribute to serious health issues, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and weakened immunity. Simple steps like exercise, deep breathing, staying connected with loved ones, and taking breaks from screens can make a big difference. Recognizing stress and learning healthy ways to cope can improve both mental and physical well-being.

Prioritizing self-care is not a luxury, it is a necessity for a healthier life.

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Local Upcoming Events & Awareness Days



3 Local Upcoming Events & Awareness Days

Event 1: Supporting Teens in Reducing Their Stress (And Ours)

Event 2: Take Control of Your Health

Event 3: Bone Density Screening

Month-Long Observances:

- Alcohol Awareness
- Autism Acceptance
- Child Abuse Prevention
- IBS Awareness
- Move More
- Oral Cancer Awareness
- Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention
- Stress Awareness
- Testicular Cancer Awareness

Key Days & Weeks:

- April 2 World Autism Awareness Day
- April 2 National Walking Day
- April 7 World Health Day
- April 7 to 13 National Public Health Week
- April 11 World Parkinsons Day
- April 11 to 17 Black Maternal Health Week
- April 20 to 26 World Immunization Week
- April 22 Earth Day
- April 25 World Malaria Day
- April 26 National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Measles Update

Take Steps to Travel Safely

Measles cases have been increasing in the US, with over 200 cases reported as of March 2025. The WRHD is urging families to take proactive steps before traveling. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine can be administered to infants as young as 6 months old if they are traveling internationally or visiting areas with active measles transmission.

"Measles is highly contagious, spreading easily through coughing, sneezing, and airborne droplets," explains Public Health Officer Megan Avallone. "It can cause severe complications, including pneumonia, brain swelling (encephalitis), and even death, especially in young children and those with weakened immune systems. The best way to protect against measles is vaccination, ideally at least two weeks before travel, ensuring children stay safe both at home and abroad."

GUIDELINES

 **Westfield Regional Health Department**
Measles Advisory
Protect Your Family Before Traveling

Contact your healthcare provider to help weigh the risk of measles exposure while traveling or in your local community.

Infants 6 to 11 months old

- The CDC recommends children 6-11 months receive the MMR vaccine before traveling internationally. This dose is in addition to the recommended two doses, not a replacement.
- Measles spreads easily through coughing, sneezing, and airborne transmission.
- Measles can cause serious complications including pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).
- Unvaccinated individuals, including infants, are at high risk of infection.

Before You Travel

- If you will be traveling internationally, or where an outbreak is occurring, talk to your pediatrician about whether your child should receive an early dose of MMR vaccine.

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Understanding H5N1: What You Need to Know About Avian Influenza

H5N1, also known as avian influenza or bird flu, is a highly contagious virus that primarily affects birds but has the potential to infect humans and other animals. While human infections are rare, they can be severe and even fatal.

How Does H5N1 Spread?

H5N1 spreads among birds through direct contact with infected birds, contaminated surfaces, or exposure to respiratory secretions and droppings. In rare cases, the virus has crossed over to humans, typically through prolonged close contact with infected birds or contaminated environments. So far, sustained human-to-human transmission has not been observed.

While the general public is unlikely to encounter H5N1, the following precautions can help reduce the risk:

- Avoid direct contact with sick or dead birds.
- Wash hands frequently, especially after handling animals or being in outdoor environments where birds are present.
- Ensure proper food safety. Cook poultry and eggs thoroughly to eliminate any potential virus.
- Follow travel advisories, if traveling to areas with known outbreaks.



TO SAFELY DISPOSE
OF DEAD BIRDS



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Protecting Cats from Avian Influenza

Recent reports have shown that H5N1 (avian influenza) can infect cats, raising concerns for pet owners. Cats may be exposed by hunting or consuming infected birds or through contact with contaminated environments. While rare, H5N1 infections in cats can cause severe illness, including respiratory distress, fever, and lethargy.

To protect your cat, keep them indoors to prevent exposure to wild birds, avoid feeding raw poultry, and wash hands after handling animals or cleaning litter boxes.



If your cat shows signs of illness, seek veterinary care immediately. Taking preventive measures can help keep your pet safe from this emerging health risk.

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Recipes of the Month

This month we are sharing two heart-healthy breakfast options.

[Whole-Grain Avocado Toast with Spinach and Poached Egg](#) [Oatmeal with Berries, Nuts and a Drizzle of Honey](#)

Whether you lean sweet or savory, here are some ideas for a morning meal that will help keep your ticker in tip-top shape.



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