

## Take Action for National Preparedness Month

Severe thunderstorms, flooding, snow storms, and power outages—these are just a few examples of emergencies that can disrupt the daily lives of Chester County residents. In order to best handle these situations, it is important to keep up-to-date on what protective measures you can take before, during, and after an emergency.

This September, as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) orchestrates its National Preparedness Month, action takes center stage. The 2015 theme is Don't Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today! The importance of preparation and communication in getting ready for emergencies that affect your community cannot be stressed enough. There are numerous resources available on the FEMA website for drafting plans and building emergency kits for different settings, such as the home, school, workplace, and everywhere in-between. Kid-friendly resources are also available for parents and educators. All in all, National Preparedness Month is all about participation: be informed, make a plan, build a kit, and be involved.

During an emergency, you should always follow instructions given to you by your local police, fire, health department or emergency management agency. Enroll in the

**DON'T WAIT. COMMUNICATE.  
MAKE YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN TODAY.**



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH!



ReadyChesCo notification service to receive emergency information for Chester County residents. If you're interested in volunteering for emergency disaster response efforts, you can register at SERVPA. Medical and non-medical volunteers are needed. Everyone has a role to play in preparing for an emergency.

The Chester County Health Department is responsible for ensuring the readiness of the county for public health emergencies of any kind. This is carried out through partnerships with agencies including, but are not limited to, Department of Emergency Services, the American Red Cross, and other Chester County organizations. Emergency Preparedness and Response is an integrated and collaborative program aimed at working with organizations throughout the county to prepare emergency contingency plans, mitigating the impact, educating the public, and enabling rapid recovery from an emergency.

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# Take a Stand to Prevent Falls

Fall is just around the corner, but older adults shouldn't have to experience falls this season. The Chester County Health Department is joining forces with the National Coalition on Aging (NCOA) and the Falls Free Coalition to celebrate the 8th annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day (FPAD) on September 23, 2015 – the first day of Fall. The observance seeks to raise awareness about how to prevent fall-related injuries among older adults. This year's theme is "Take a Stand to Prevent Falls."

It is important to realize that falling is not an inevitable result of aging. Studies show that a combination of behavior changes can significantly reduce falls among older adults. Experts recommend:

- Participating in a physical activity

regimen with balance, strength training and flexibility components

- Consulting with a health professional about a falls risk assessment
- Periodically reviewing medications with your doctor
- Getting annual eye and hearing exams
- Creating a safe home environment

Learn more about how to prevent falls by attending the Falls Prevention Awareness Expo on Thursday, September 24 from 9:30 am – 12 pm at the West Chester Area Senior Center (530 East Union Street, West Chester, PA 19380). Free blood pressure, hydration, hearing, vision, assistive device, fall risk/balance assessment screenings\* and foot and shoe information will be offered.



Information on Emergency Services in the county and a Drug Take-Back event will also be available.

For more information on falls prevention, call Katie Kuffner, Public Health Educator, at 610.344.5340 or email [kkuffner@chesco.org](mailto:kkuffner@chesco.org).

*\*Appointments are needed to participate in the falls risk screening, call 610-431-4242.*

# This Flu Season, You Call the Shots

The school year is underway, and you're feeling like you have your family's routine down pat. You're making sure the kids are on top of their homework. You're getting them to and from after-school activities. Have you also made plans to get your family vaccinated against the flu?

School season means flu season—the flu virus is most active from October to May. While the flu causes mild illness in most people (think fever, sore throat, body aches, among other symptoms), it can lead to serious health complications and even death in others. Young children, older adults,

pregnant women, and people with certain chronic health conditions are at a greater risk for serious complications.

The single best way you can protect yourself, your family, and others around you from the flu is to get vaccinated. In fact, everyone 6 months or older should get vaccinated each year, as early as possible. Flu vaccines are available at the Chester County Health Department beginning September 22 at the following times:

- Tuesdays 9:00am - 4:00pm
- Wednesdays 11:00am - 6:00pm
- Fridays 9:00am - 4:00pm



Make an appointment at [www.chesco.org/flu](http://www.chesco.org/flu) or call 610-344-6252.

The Chester County Health Department is able to bill most insurance companies for flu vaccine.

# September is National Childhood Obesity Month

One in 3 children in the United States is overweight or obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

The good news is that childhood obesity can be prevented. In honor of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, the Chester County Health Department encourages your family to make healthy changes together. Here are a few ideas:

- Get active outside: Walk around the neighborhood, go on a

bike ride, or play basketball at the park. Visit the Chester County Parks website to learn about local parks, trails, and activities.

- Limit screen time: Keep screen time (time spent on the computer, watching TV, or playing video games) to 2 hours or less a day.
- Make healthy meals: Buy and serve more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods. Taking small steps as a family can help your child stay at a healthy weight.

Small steps go a long way towards helping your family to better health. For more tips on helping your children stay at a healthy weight, [click here](#).



## Healthy Eating Tips for your Family

When it comes to nutrition, children begin to develop their eating habits at a young age, and this starts with what they are offered at home. Here are some tips for making healthy eating a priority for your family:

1. Consider the example you're setting for your children. Does your diet include lots of fruits and vegetables, lean meat, low-fat dairy, and whole grains? Do you limit sweets and high-fat foods so that you're eating them in moderation and on occasion?
2. Make healthy foods the easy choice in your household—keep a fruit bowl on the counter and stock the fridge with veggies and low-fat yogurt or cheese.
3. Keep in mind that your children's preferences may differ from your own. Provide a variety of healthy options to accommodate food preferences.
4. Give your children the opportunity to try healthy foods multiple times. Oftentimes a child needs to be exposed to new foods many times before trying and liking them.
5. Get your kids involved in the kitchen and experiment with different recipes and cooking techniques. Having fun together cooking and eating is a great way to help children see the value in healthy foods.

For additional information on healthy eating for your family, visit [www.kidseatright.org](http://www.kidseatright.org).



# Dental Health Trivia

October brings visions of Halloween, trick-or-treating, and sugary treats to mind. Appropriately enough, October is also National Dental Hygiene Month. In honor of oral health, try your hand at some dental hygiene trivia:

1. True or False: Acidic foods and beverages cause tooth decay.

*True. Acidic foods and beverages such as juice or soda can break down the enamel of your teeth, weakening them and making them more prone to decay.*

2. At what age should children have their first dental visit?

- a. 1 year
- b. 3 years
- c. 5 years

*A. It is generally recommended that a child have his or her first visit to the dentist by the age of 1 or within 6 months after the first tooth appears.*

3. How often should toothbrushes be replaced?

- a. Every 1-2 months
- b. Every 3-4 months
- c. Every 5-6 months

*B. According to the American Dental Association, you should replace toothbrushes approximately every 3-4 months or sooner if the bristles become frayed with use.*

4. True or False: Poor dental health is linked to many serious diseases and conditions.

*True. Some studies have linked common oral problems to other illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, and Alzheimer's disease.*

5. True or False: Tooth loss is an inevitable part of aging.

*False. As you get older, good dental hygiene becomes even more important to dental health. If cared for properly, your teeth can last a lifetime.*



The Chester County Health Department's dental health program for the residents of Chester County includes education, referrals to dental resources, and a school based dental sealant program. For more information, contact Luz Garzón, Dental Health Coordinator, at 610-344-4452 or lgarzon@chesco.org.

## Reusable Grocery Bag Tips

For those interested in protecting the environment, reusable grocery bags are a no-brainer. But when it comes to purchasing certain foods such as raw meats, poultry, and fish, harmful bacteria like E-coli, Salmonella, and Listeria could cause contamination and food-borne illness. Rest assured, though—there are simple ways you can reduce the spread of bacteria and keep yourself and your family safe:

- **Designate Bags** - Do not carry non-food items such as children's toys, clothing and other items in the same reusable bags that you take to the grocery store.

- **Double Bag Raw Meats** - Always first place raw meats in a disposable plastic bag before placing in a re-usable bag. This will help catch any juices that can leak from packaging and contaminate other foods.
- **Separate Foods** - Use separate bags for different types of food. Dedicate one bag for meat, fish, or poultry; another for fresh fruits and vegetables, and others for prepared, canned, or boxed foods.
- **Wash Bags Frequently** - Wash cloth bags in a washing machine

and clean plastic bags by hand with hot water and soap. Let dry completely before storing.

- **Ensure Proper Storage** - Store reusable bags in a cool, dry place. High temperatures, like those inside a car or car trunk, can cause disease-causing germs to grow faster.



# Bat-Proof to Prevent Rabies

Rabies is caused by a virus most often transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. It is fatal but preventable. Most cases of rabies occur in animals, but humans are also at risk. Bats are the most common source of human rabies in the US. Take the following steps to keep yourself, your family, and your pets free from rabies.

## BAT-PROOF YOUR HOME

Bat-proofing your home is one of the best strategies for preventing rabies. It may be best to contact an animal-control agency for assistance. If you choose to do the “bat-proofing” yourself, here are some suggestions:

- “Bat-proof” during the fall or winter, as this is when most bats leave homes to hibernate. During the summer, many young bats are unable to fly. If you “bat-proof” during this time, bats may be trapped inside your home.
- Examine your home for holes. Any holes larger than a quarter-inch should be caulked.
- Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking.

- Ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.
- Install window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics.

## CAPTURE BATS WITHIN THE HOME

If a bat is present in your home, contact an animal-control agency for assistance. If professional help is not available, use precautions to capture the bat safely. While wearing gloves, approach the bat slowly once it lands and place a box or coffee can over it. Slide a piece of cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Secure the cardboard to the container and punch small holes in the cardboard, allowing the bat to breathe. If you are sure that no exposure occurred, release the bat outside. If a potential bite or other exposure has occurred, consider having the bat tested for rabies.

## EXPOSURE TO A BAT

If you are bitten by a bat or saliva from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or wounds:

1. Wash the affected area thoroughly



with soap and water.

2. Get medical attention immediately.
3. Call the Chester County Health Department at 610-344-6452 to make arrangements to have the bat tested. You may be able to delay rabies treatment by having the bat tested.

If you suspect a bat bite has occurred but are not sure, you should still seek immediate medical attention and contact the Chester County Health Department to have the bat tested. If an exposure has occurred and it cannot be ruled out that the bat is free from rabies, post-exposure treatment may be considered. For more information on rabies, visit our website.

# E-Cigarettes: A New Concern for Nicotine Addiction

Ask people what they think of when they hear the word “nicotine,” and most will respond with “cigarettes.” But while cigarettes and other tobacco products remain public health concerns, a newer class of addictive products has emerged—electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes and related products such as vape pens and hookah pens do not contain tobacco, but deliver an addictive dose of nicotine, along with flavorings and other chemicals to users. These products, which are sold at vape shops and other retail outlets, pose a risk for

addiction and health problems later in life to Chester County residents, especially youth.

Because the use of e-cigarettes and related products is controversial, please keep the following facts in mind. E-cigarettes are:

- NOT regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Manufactured by over 400 companies
- Specifically marketed towards young people, similar to how traditional cigarettes were marketed many years ago

- Sold in over 700 flavors (like grape-licious and watermelon burst) and colors/designs (like cheetah and chevron print)
- Rapidly being included in the “prohibited” list on tobacco policies at restaurants, parks, and other outdoor venues

If you or someone you know is addicted to nicotine, please visit the Chester County Health Department’s website for tobacco and nicotine prevention, cessation information, and resources.



# Home Water and Septic System Workshop

**FREE!**

**FREE!**

**Tues. September 29, 2015  
1-3 pm or 6-8 pm**

**Chester Co Public Safety  
Training Campus, Room 123  
137 Modena Rd  
South Coatesville PA 19320**

## **Understand and Protect Your Water Supply and Treatment Systems**

Wells, springs, and cisterns supply water to about 1/3 of Chester and Lancaster Co. homes. Many residents use on-lot septic systems to treat and dispose of wastewater. This workshop will provide information on protecting, testing, and treating private water supplies. We will discuss septic system inspection and maintenance. Learn how to protect your health, your property, and our shared ground and surface water resources.

### **Instructors**

Bryan Swistock, Penn State University  
Diane Oleson, Penn State Extension York Co  
Amy Galford, Penn State Ext. Cumberland Co

### **Free pre-registration required**

By Sept 24 by phone (717) 240-6510 or  
<http://extension.psu.edu/home-water-septic>

### **Free Drinking Water Testing & Book**

Free drinking water screening for coliform bacteria, *E. coli*, pH, dissolved solids, and nitrate will be provided for the first 60 households to register. Results from simple tests can help guide you in future testing by accredited labs. Sample collection instructions will be provided when you register. The first 30 households to register will receive a free copy of the book *A Guide to Private Water Systems in Pennsylvania*.

Support provided by East Fallowfield Township and the Master Well Owner Network grant from PA DEP and PGWA.

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact Amy Galford at 717-240-6510.

**This publication is available in alternative media on request.**

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