

Borough of Butler Health Resource



**BOROUGH OF
BUTLER**

**DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH**

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Pandemic & Seasonal Flu: Nothing to Sneeze At!

Most of those reading the *Borough of Butler Health Resource* have lived through an influenza pandemic - the H1N1 pandemic event of 2009. Due to good preparation/response and a reasonably mild strain of flu, H1N1 was not as catastrophic as it might have otherwise been, but the specter of a global flu pandemic remains a considerable and widespread health concern. As we evaluate the impacts of a pandemic, it may be helpful to define the risks and think about what we can do.

Seasonal & Pandemic Influenza

Seasonal flu is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person, and is the type of flu most commonly seen. Most people have some immunity, and a reliable vaccine is generally available each year during the typical flu season of October to April.

Pandemic flu is virulent human flu that causes a global outbreak of serious illness. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity, and for which there is no vaccine. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. It is difficult to predict when the next pandemic will occur or how severe it will be. Wherever and whenever a pandemic starts, everyone around the world could be at risk.

What Has Been Done?

For a number of years, there have been significant national,

statewide and local resources to guide our preparedness for and response to an influenza pandemic, with the intent of:

- Stopping, slowing or otherwise limiting the spread of a pandemic to the United States
- Limiting the domestic spread of a pandemic, and mitigating disease, suffering and death
- Sustaining infrastructure and limiting impact to the economy and the functioning of society. In the United States plans for a national strategy to combat pandemic influenza, there are more than 300 actions.

A pandemic occurs in many locales almost simultaneously, and often globally. Because of this, much of the planning for a pandemic is the responsibility of state and local governments. The 50 states have for a decade shared federal funds to fill gaps in pandemic influenza preparedness plans and to test these plans. The State of New Jersey and its local health departments went through this process, and there is always a need to refine plans.

What Can You Do?

While local, state and federal government remains prepared for the potential of another pandemic, it is important to think about the challenges that you might face, particularly if conditions become severe. Social disruption could be widespread. Schools may closed for an extended period of time. Transportation services may be



Seasonal influenza is responsible for roughly 36,000 deaths each year in the United States

disrupted, and work may be difficult or impossible in some cases. People will need advice and help both at work and at home, so good communication will be essential. You can take some of the following steps:

- Be prepared by stocking a supply of water and non-perishable food.
- Stay healthy by making good hygiene a habit, washing hands frequently and staying home when sick.
- Get informed by identifying sources you can count on for reliable information.

Please contact the Health Department if you would like a preparedness checklist - as well as resources for family health and emergency contact information - to help guide your planning and preparation. And don't forget to get your seasonal flu shot!

Zika Virus - What You Need to Know

Though 3,712 travel associated cases of Zika virus have been confirmed among United States residents, the only cases acquired in the U.S. have been found in Miami Beach, Florida



For information and resources regarding Zika virus, go to www.cdc.gov/zika or call the Borough of Butler Health Department at 973-828-7200, ext. 237

Zika virus disease (Zika) is a disease caused by the Zika virus, which is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected. However, Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly, as well as other severe fetal brain defects. Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

Zika virus was first discovered in 1947 and is named after the Zika Forest in Uganda. In 1952, the first human cases of Zika were detected and since then, outbreaks of Zika have been reported in tropical Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. It is believed that Zika outbreaks have probably occurred in many locations. Before 2007, at least 14 cases of Zika had been documented, although other cases were likely to have occurred and were not reported. Because the symptoms of Zika are similar to those of many other diseases, many cases may not have been recognized.

In May 2015, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

issued an alert regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infection in Brazil. On February 1, 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Zika virus a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Local transmission has been reported in many other countries and territories, and Zika virus will likely continue to spread to new areas. Specific areas where Zika virus is spreading are often difficult to determine and are likely to change over time. Residents with international travel plans are encouraged to visit www.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information for the most updated travel information.

Outbreaks of Zika virus are occurring in a number of countries and territories, and because the mosquitoes that spread Zika are found throughout the world, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises that it is likely that outbreaks will spread to new countries. On Feb. 1, 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern because of clusters of microcephaly and other neurological disorders in some areas affected by Zika.

As of October 12, 105 cases of Zika had been detected in the continental United States, though all cases have been in a very limited part of Miami Beach, Florida.. Additionally, Zika virus has been found in 3,712 travelers

returning to the United States and in some non-travelers who got Zika through sex with a traveler. Zika has also been reported in U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa. As of October 12, 133 of the travel related Zika cases were among New Jersey residents. It is very important to point out, however, that no cases of Zika virus among New Jersey residents were locally acquired.

The CDC is the lead United States agency for Zika planning and response, and the CDC's Emergency Operations Center is activated at its highest level to respond to the Zika outbreak. CDC is working closely with public health partners, state health departments and local health agencies to alert healthcare providers and the public about Zika. Activities include posting of travel notices and other travel-related guidance; provision of diagnostic tests to state health laboratories; Zika case monitoring and reporting; guidelines to inform testing and treatment of people; research into effects of the disease; and working with partners around the world to develop a better understanding of Zika. Local mosquito control personnel are also working hard with surveillance activities. Call the Health Department at 973-828-7200, ext. 237, with any questions about Zika virus.

Your Health Department at Work

The Borough of Butler Health Department provides a wide range of public and environmental health services designed to promote and protect the health of our residents. The Health Department plans and implements programs each year and helps assure a safe community. If you have any questions regarding clinics, programs or other public health activities, call 973-828-7200, ext. 237, and ask for:

Peter Tabbot
Health Officer

Linda Remmert
Clerk

Janet Hess
Public Health Nurse

James Breiten, Cara Sileno, Sandra Leonard
Environmental Health Specialists



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Halloween Safety Tips

Reprinted from AAA - Auto Clubs of America

As children take to the streets on Halloween to trick-or-treat, their risk of being injured by motorists increases greatly. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that Halloween is consistently one of the top three days for pedestrian injuries and fatalities, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that children are four times more likely to be struck by a motor vehicle on Halloween than any other day of the year. Because excited trick-or-treaters often forget about safety, motorists and parents must be even more alert. Following are some tips for helping keep young ones safe on Halloween:

Motorists

- Slow down in residential neighborhoods and obey all traffic signs and signals. Drive at least five mph below the posted speed limit to give yourself extra time to react to children who may dart into the street.
- Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs. In dark costumes, they'll be harder to see at night.
- Look for children crossing the street. They may not be paying attention to traffic and may cross the street mid-block or between parked cars.
- Carefully enter and exit driveways and alleys.
- Turn on your headlights to make yourself more visible – even in the daylight.
- Broaden your scanning by looking for children left and right into yards and front porches.

Parents

- Ensure an adult or older, responsible youth is available to supervise children under age 12.
- Plan and discuss the route your trick-or-treaters will follow.
- Instruct children to travel only in familiar areas and along established routes.

- Teach children to stop only at well-lit houses and to never to enter a stranger's home or garage.
- Establish a time for children to return home.
- Tell children not to eat any treats until they get home.
- Review trick-or-treating safety precautions, including pedestrian and traffic safety rules.
- Make sure Halloween costumes are flame-retardant and visible with retro-reflective material.

Trick-or-Treaters

- Be bright at night – wear retro-reflective tape on costumes and treat buckets to improve visibility to motorists and others.
- Wear disguises that don't obstruct vision, and avoid facemasks. Instead, use nontoxic face paint. Also, watch the length of billowy costumes to help avoid tripping.
- Ensure props are flexible and blunt-tipped to avoid injury from tripping or horseplay.
- Carry a flashlight containing fresh batteries, and place it face down in the treat bucket to free up one hand. Never shine it into the eyes of oncoming drivers.
- Stay on sidewalks and avoid walking in streets if possible.
- If there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic.
- Look both ways and listen for traffic before crossing the street.
- Cross streets only at the corner, and never cross between parked vehicles or mid-block.
- Trick-or-treat in a group if someone older cannot go with you.
- Tell your parents where you are going.

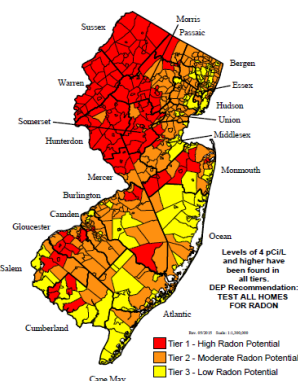
Contact your local AAA Club for more tips and information about Halloween safety.



Radon: An Invisible Risk in Our Homes

January is Radon Action Month, but since radon carries health risks and is present in elevated levels throughout northern New Jersey, residents should be aware of the facts regarding radon exposure.

Radon is a radioactive gas released from the normal decay of uranium, thorium and radium in rocks and soil. Particles from radon can damage cells that line the lungs, leading to lung cancer. Radon is recognized as the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., and is associated with 15,000 - 22,000 lung cancer deaths each year. Radon gas seeps up through the ground and makes its way into homes through cracks or breaks in the



foundation, and may also occasionally dissolve into ground water. Radon exists in very low levels outdoors, but may accumulate in areas without adequate ventilation, like closed basements.

Testing is the only way to know if your home has elevated radon levels. Inexpensive test kits are available at many hardware stores, and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) maintains a list of certified radon testing and mitigation companies. For more information on radon, or for testing and mitigation resources, residents are encouraged to call the Health Department at 973-828-7200, ext. 237.

**Borough of Butler
Board of Health
One Ace Road
Butler NJ 07405**

**Phone
973-838-7200, x237**

**Email
butlerhealthnj@gmail.com**

**Online
www.butlerborough.com**

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Robert W. Alviene

Administrator
James Lampmann

Council President
Edwin Vath

Council
Robert Fox
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Health Specialists*

Janet Hess
Susan Sooy
Public Health Nurses

Linda Remmert
Clerk

Lisa Perry
Animal Control Officer

November is American Diabetes Month

Did you know that 29 million Americans have diabetes, and nearly 90 million additional Americans are at risk of becoming diabetic? Diabetes doesn't discriminate - it affects men and women, young and old, and people of all races, shapes and sizes.

There are often no outward signs of diabetes among those who suffer and fight this chronic illness, and that is why there is a critical need to raise awareness while dispelling

myths and misunderstandings about this growing public health crisis that affects so many of us, as well as our loved ones. This is why the American Diabetes Association designates each November as American Diabetes Month, and it is up to us to bring attention to the disease and those affected by it.

People often associate diabetes with the medications and devices used to manage it, but for many, the disease dictates how they

organize their day, what is eaten at every meal, how they choose to be physically active and how they spend their money. Data shows that people suffering diabetes may have health care costs that are 2.3 times higher than someone without diabetes, as specific forms of treatment are required. Residents are encouraged to become diabetes advocates, for themselves, their families and friends, to ensure this critical disease gets the attention it deserves!

Prostate Health: Knowing the Risks & Realities

Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer in America, affecting one in seven men. It is also a very complex disease, with multiple subtypes of cancer, some aggressive and some non-life-threatening. Prostate cancer may also be a story of great hope. While the disease takes about 26,000 lives each year and serves as the second leading cause of cancer death in U.S. men, survival rates are tremendous if it is detected early. If diagnosed early, the five year survival rate for prostate cancer is nearly 100 percent. At 10 years post diagnosis, 98 percent of men diagnosed early remain alive.

Because one in seven men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, it is very important for me to learn about the risks. There are several major factors that influence risk to this disease, and some of these risks are modifiable. So what are some risk factors and why?

Age: The older you are, the more likely you are to be diagnosed. One in 10,000 men under 40 will be diagnosed, but rates escalate to one in 14 for men aged 60 - 69.

Race: African American men are nearly 2.5 times as likely to die from prostate cancer compared to Caucasian men.

Genetics: A man with a father or brother who developed prostate cancer is twice as likely to develop the disease.

Geography: American men have a 17% risk of developing prostate cancer, but for men in rural China, the risk is two percent. However, when Chinese men move to western culture, their risk increases substantially.

Body Mass Index: While measures of obesity are not linked to greater risk of diagnosis overall, obese men are more likely to have aggressive disease.

Other Risks: Lack of exercise and high calcium intake have been linked to diagnosis.

Prostate cancer is a very serious disease, but it is not fatal to most men who are diagnosed. Early detection is key! For more information, talk to your physician about prostate cancer.

Welcome to the Borough of Butler Health Resource!

Dear Residents:

Welcome to the second edition of the *Borough of Butler Health Resource*, a regular newsletter featuring informative articles, tips on healthy choices and information regarding health events for residents of the Borough of Butler. We hope this issue serves as a valuable resource in your efforts to make informed decisions about healthy living.

Please take some time to review the articles in this issue of the *Health Resource*, including timely information regarding American Diabetes Month, prostate health, Halloween safety, Zika virus and radon. On behalf of the Borough Council, Town Administration and Board of Health, we wish you a healthy and safe holiday season!

Robert W. Alviene
Mayor

Suzanne Finelli
Board of Health President