



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

May, 2026  
Volume 3, Issue 5

# NEWSLETTER

## Sussex County Division of Health



Welcome to  
the health  
hub!



### Bears Are Active



As spring arrives in Sussex County, black bears are emerging from their winter dens in search of food. Our area has one of the highest black bear populations in New Jersey, so it's important for residents to take simple steps to prevent unwanted encounters.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Black bears are highly intelligent and have a powerful sense of smell. When food is easily available, they will return again and again—putting both residents and the bears at risk.



#### PROTECT YOUR HOME & NEIGHBORHOOD



##### Secure your garbage

- Use bear-resistant containers when possible
- Store trash in a garage or secure area
- Put trash out the morning of pickup, not overnight

##### Remove outdoor food sources

- Bring in pet food and bird feeders
- Clean grills after each use
- Pick up fallen fruit from trees

##### Keep your property clean

- Avoid leaving food scraps outside
- Maintain a clutter-free yard



#### ITS THE LAW

Feeding black bears is illegal in New Jersey and can result in fines up to \$1,000. Intentional or unintentional feeding (like unsecured trash) can create dangerous situations.



#### IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR

- Stay calm and do not run
- Back away slowly
- Make loud noises to scare the bear away
- Make yourself appear larger
- Always give the bear an escape route





UNDERSTANDING

# MOSQUITO SAFETY

## MOSQUITO SEASON IS HERE

As temperatures rise, mosquito activity increases. While they're a nuisance, mosquitoes can also carry diseases like West Nile Virus and Malaria.

Prevention starts at home!



## PROTECT YOUR HOME

- Empty water from birdbaths, flowerpots, and buckets weekly
- Clear gutters and drains
- Cover or remove outdoor containers
- Maintain pools properly

## PROTECT YOURSELF

- Use insect repellent when outdoors: Choose EPA-approved repellents
- Dress to reduce exposure
- Keep mosquitoes out of your home: Check window and door screens to prevent from entering
- Limit outdoor exposure during peak times



## MAINTAIN YOUR YARD

- Keep grass and shrubs trimmed
- Remove old tires and debris
- Fill in low spots or areas of standing water in your lawn
- Store outdoor equipment in a way that prevents water buildup

## HOW MOSQUITOES ARE CONTROLLED

The Sussex County Office of Mosquito Control uses a comprehensive approach to reduce mosquito populations:

- **Surveillance & Testing:** Monitoring mosquito populations and testing for disease
- **Larval Control:** Treating standing water to stop mosquitoes before they become adults
- **Targeted Spraying:** Treatments in high-risk areas when necessary
- **Biological Control:** Using natural methods, like fish that eat mosquito larvae





May is:



# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental Health Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage support for those affected by mental health conditions. Mental health is just as important as physical health and plays a vital role in overall well-being.



**More than 1 in 7 U.S. youth (ages 6–17) have a mental health disorder (depression, anxiety, OCD, etc.)**

**1 in 20**

**More than 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar, etc.)**



**More than 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year**

You Are Not Alone. National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2025). [https://www.nami.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NAMI\\_YouAreNotAlone\\_2025.pdf](https://www.nami.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NAMI_YouAreNotAlone_2025.pdf)

## Warning Signs

- Feeling sad or withdrawn for long periods
- Extreme mood changes
- Changes in sleep or eating habits
- Loss of interest in activities
- Difficulty concentrating



Recognizing these signs early can help individuals get the support they need.

## How to Support

- Talk openly about mental health
- Check in on friends, family, and coworkers
- Practice self-care (sleep, nutrition, physical activity)
- Seek professional help when needed
- Reduce stigma by sharing accurate information

Seeking professional help when needed and sharing accurate information can also help reduce stigma.

## You Are Not Alone

Support is available, and help is within reach. If you or someone you know is struggling, reaching out is a strong and important first step.

📞 Call or Text **988**  
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline  
🌐 Visit: **988lifeline.org**

Scan for more information

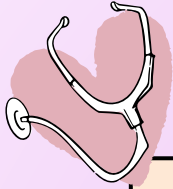




**MAY IS:**

# WOMEN'S HEALTH MONTH

**Women's health is essential to the strength of families and communities. This month, the Sussex County Division of Health encourages all women to prioritize preventive care, stay informed, and take steps toward a healthier future.**



## Recommended Preventive Screenings

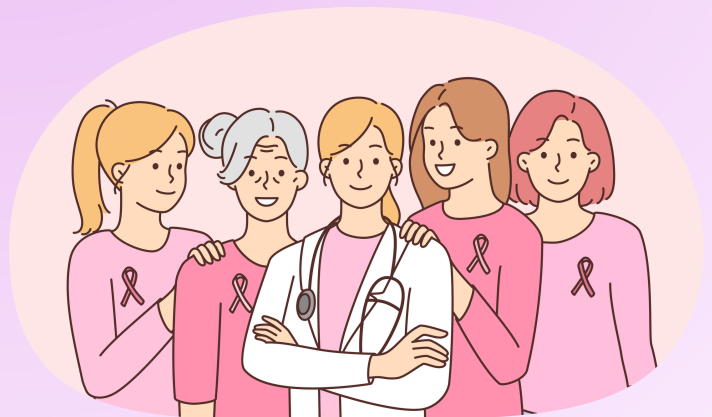
Routine care plays a key role in maintaining long-term health. Current guidelines recommend:



Breast Cancer Screening	Starting around age 40 High-risk individuals should consult their doctor about earlier screening.
Cervical Cancer Screening	Pap tests every 3 years (ages 21–65)
Blood Pressure & Cholesterol Checks	To reduce heart disease risk
Diabetes Screening	Especially for women ages 35–70 with risk factors
STI Testing	Particularly for women ages 15–24 or those at higher risk
Mental Health Screenings	Including depression and anxiety

### Checklist to Better Health:

- Schedule your annual well-woman exam
- Stay up to date on vaccinations
- Eat a balanced diet and stay active
- Get enough sleep and manage stress
- Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol use



# TICK SEASON IS HERE

*Prevention Starts With You!*



**AS WARMER WEATHER ARRIVES, TICKS BECOME MORE ACTIVE, BRINGING INCREASED RISK FOR SEVERAL ILLNESSES. WHILE LYME DISEASE IS THE MOST WELL-KNOWN, THERE ARE OTHER IMPORTANT TICK-BORNE DISEASES TO BE AWARE OF.**

## Anaplasmosis

- Spread by blacklegged (deer) ticks.
- Symptoms including but not limited to: fever, chills, headache, muscle aches
- Appears 1–2 weeks after a tick bite.

## Babesiosis

- Spread by blacklegged (deer) ticks.
- Symptoms are including but not limited to: fever, fatigue, chills, anemia
- Some people may have no symptoms.
- Higher risk for older adults & immunocompromised individuals.

## Alpha-gal Syndrome

- Caused by lone star tick bites.
- Triggers an allergy to red meat and meat products.
- Symptoms are including but not limited to: hives, nausea, stomach pain
- Reactions can occur hours after eating meat.

## Powassan Virus Disease

- Spread by blacklegged (deer) ticks.
- Symptoms are including but not limited to: fever, headache, vomiting
- Severe cases can lead to brain inflammation (encephalitis).

## Ehrlichiosis

- Spread by lone star ticks.
- Symptoms are including but not limited to: fever, headache, fatigue, muscle aches
- Rash may occur (more common in children).



## Stay Protected!

- Use EPA-approved insect repellent
- Wear long sleeves and pants outdoors
- Perform full-body tick checks after being outside
- Shower within 2 hours of coming inside
- Remove ticks promptly and properly

# SPOTLIGHT

## OF THE MONTH



### DIVISION OF COMMUNITY & YOUTH SERVICES

The Division of Community & Youth Services plays an important role in supporting Sussex County residents by connecting youth and families to mental health, substance use, and community-based services.

#### **Youth Services Commission**

Advocates for youth with social, emotional, and behavioral needs, including those at risk of court involvement. Focuses on connecting young people to appropriate support and services, including mental health care.

#### **Detention Alternatives**

Provides mentoring and case management for youth involved in the court system. Staff support families with transportation, service coordination, and access to resources such as mental health services when needed.

#### **Human Services Advisory Council**

Reviews local human service needs and makes recommendations on programs and funding. Helps guide county and state decisions to improve access to services, including mental health supports.

#### **Municipal Alliance & Substance Use and Mental Health Board**

These groups work together to promote substance use prevention, mental health awareness, and early intervention. They also help plan, advocate for, and allocate funding to ensure Sussex County residents have access to critical behavioral health services and community-based supports.

Together, these programs help strengthen support systems and build a healthier, more connected community.



Scan for more information!

