

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024

This newsletter was created by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Preparedness Program to better prepare residents for public health emergencies, such as severe storms, disease outbreaks, and other emergencies.



Read on for information about how to prepare yourself, your loved ones and your home during the spring season.

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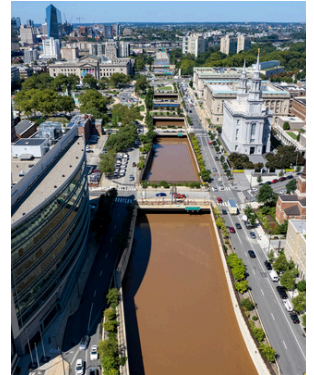
This newsletter is available in Amharic, Arabic, Dari, French, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese at bit.ly/CRPNnewsletter.

To request free printed copies, visit bit.ly/PHPMaterials or leave a message at **215-429-3016**.

How Does Climate Change Affect Flooding?

Climate change can affect weather patterns and temperatures in different regions.

As a result of climate change, Philadelphia will experience extreme heat and heavier rainfall, causing sea levels to rise and increased flood risk.

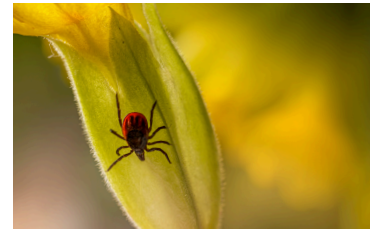


Vector-Borne Diseases

Warmer temperatures and other climate factors influence vectors like ticks and mosquitoes that can transmit diseases.

Shorter winters and longer, hotter summers might mean conditions become better for carriers of vector-borne diseases.

Learn how to protect yourself from ticks and mosquitoes on page 2 and at bit.ly/Phlfightthebite.



Sign Up for ReadyPhiladelphia and Be the First to Know

The **Office of Emergency Management** shares information about severe weather through free email and text alerts using the City's mass notification system, ReadyPhiladelphia.

For free text alerts, please text **READYPHILA** to **888-777** or sign up at bit.ly/ReadyPhilaAlert.

Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones

Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a germ ticks carry and can spread to humans through their bite. **Ticks in Philadelphia are known to carry Lyme disease.**

Ticks are usually found in parks, and yards with high grass and wooded environments.

Prevent tick bites

- Use an EPA-registered repellent.
 - To find the right insect repellent for you, visit bit.ly/findrepellent.
- Stay on the center of trails.
- Check your clothing for ticks.
- Shower and check your whole body for ticks and use a mirror if needed.

How to remove a tick

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to pull upwards with an even, steady pressure to remove the tick.
2. Clean the area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

A tick needs to be attached for 36 hours to get Lyme disease. If you remove a tick quickly (within 24 hours), you can greatly reduce your chances of getting Lyme disease.

For detailed instructions on how to dispose of live ticks visit bit.ly/tick_removal.

Get medical care immediately if:

- You cannot or do not want to remove a tick on your own.
- You develop a fever or red rash in the shape of a circle surrounding the bite.



Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are common when the weather is warm. Most mosquito bites can be itchy but some spread germs that can make you sick.

Prevent mosquito bites

- **Use bug spray**
 - To find the right insect repellent for you, visit bit.ly/findrepellent.
 - To get safety tips on how to apply insect repellent on children, visit bit.ly/repellent_safety_tips.
- **Cover up**
 - Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks to prevent bites.
- **Dump water**
 - Empty or cover anything near your home that holds water, like flowerpots, buckets, or water dishes, to stop mosquitoes from breeding around your home.



What is West Nile Virus?

- A disease that is spread by the bite of a mosquito.
- **Mosquitoes in Philadelphia are known to carry West Nile Virus.**
- Most people who get infected will not get sick, but some develop fever and flu-like symptoms and, in rare cases, inflammation or swelling of the brain.
- People 50 years and older are at the highest risk for severe disease and death.
 - If you or a family member experience unexplained headaches, weakness, or fatigue, speak with your primary care provider.

For more information on mosquitos and West Nile Virus, visit bit.ly/Mosquito_bites.

Flooding in Philadelphia

The chance of flooding is growing in Philadelphia and is expected to continue to grow. This is due to many factors, including climate change. Rising temperatures contribute to increases in sea level, more severe storms and storm surges, and larger amounts of precipitation, all of which cause floods and make them more severe.

These changes also increase health risks associated with flooding.

For more on flooding in Philadelphia, visit bit.ly/PWDFlood.

Preparing for a Flood

- Keep a battery-operated AM/FM radio set to a local station.
- Create an emergency kit/go bag. For more information, visit bit.ly/MakeAGoBag.
- Sign up with ReadyPhiladelphia for free weather alerts by texting **READYPHILA** to **888-777** or at bit.ly/ReadyPhila.

During and After a Flood

Avoid flood waters

- **DO NOT** drive or walk across flooded roads.
- Just one foot of rushing water is enough to carry a car away.
- Flood water contains harmful germs, chemicals, and trash.
 - Wash your hands if you touch flood water.
- **TURN OFF** gas, power, and water if the home floods.

If you lose power

- If you see fallen power lines or smell gas, call PECO's emergency line at 1-800-841-4141.
- Discard food if the refrigerator has not been on for more than four hours.
- Replace medications that require refrigeration.



Mold Prevention and Cleanup

**Mold can cause eye and skin irritation and allergic reactions.
If you have asthma, mold can trigger asthma attacks.**

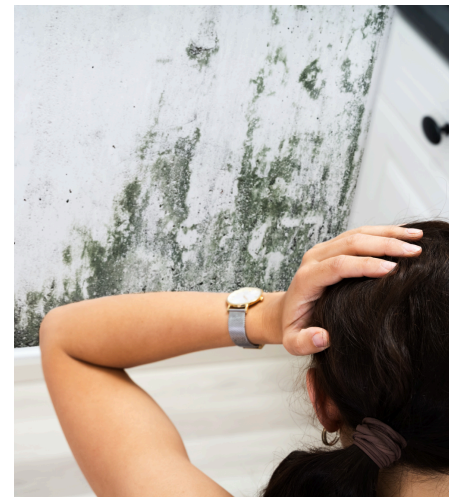
Prevention

- Clean and dry wet surfaces within 24 hours and discard items that can't be dried.
- To dry, use fans, air conditioning, and dehumidifiers.

For safe clean up

- Wear rubber gloves, eye protection, a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and a N-95 face mask.
- Open doors and windows.
- You do not need to use bleach. Use a non-ammonia soap or detergent. **NEVER** mix bleach with ammonia.

For more information on floods and mold, visit bit.ly/floods_cdc.



Respiratory Viruses

Stay up to date with immunizations and protect yourself from severe illness with an updated COVID-19 vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccine was updated to provide extra protection from current Omicron variants.

RSV Immunization can prevent severe RSV disease in infants and adults aged 60 and older.

It is safe to get all three vaccines at the same time.

To help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- **Stay home if you're sick.**
- Test for COVID if you have any symptoms.

Questions? Call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at 215-685-5488. Press 2 for Spanish; press 3 for interpretation in your language. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

For information on COVID testing, visit bit.ly/Covid19_test.

For more information about flu, COVID and RSV, visit bit.ly/FluPHL, bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL, bit.ly/RSV_PHL.



Mental Health Resource Corner

More than 1 out of every 6 adults in Philadelphia has been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

Need help with a mental health crisis?
Call **215-685-6440**.

For Mental Health and Addiction Services, call **888-545-2600**.

Open 24/7; interpretation is available.

For free online screening and resources, visit HealthyMindsPhilly.org.

Find a Healthcare Provider

It is important to have a primary care provider you trust to help you stay healthy, especially if you have a chronic health condition.

Use the **Primary Care Finder** at www.phila.gov/primary-care to find free or low-cost medical care.

Search by language, location, specialty and more.



Let's stay connected

Visit our website at bit.ly/PDPHPreparednessOutreach.

For printed copies of this newsletter, questions, or problems with the translation, email us at PublicHealthPreparedness@phila.gov or leave a message at **215-429-3016**.

We would love to hear from you!

Sign up for the **Community Response Partner Network (CRPN)** at bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse.



Get essential public health information to share with family, friends, and neighbors.