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QUABBIN HEALTH DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE NEWSLETTER



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Shamrock Means "Summer Plant"

The name for the shamrock originates from the age-old Irish word "seamrog." This word is translated in some cases to mean "summer plant," which makes sense because white clover is prolific in the summer months. You often see bees all over it. The name also comes from the Gaelic word meaning "little clover."

In the News:

The CDC has updated their isolation guidance for respiratory illnesses and applies it to common respiratory illness including COVID-19, influenza, and RSV.

If you are sick, the CDC recommends approaching it in two phases:

Phase 1: Stay home when you are sick until symptoms are improving and you are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

****This is the time when you are the most contagious.** You may not always have a fever with every illness, so you should pay attention to other systems including cough, muscle aches, etc. The severity of symptoms are loosely connected to how contagious you are.

****The most common definition for when symptoms are improving is when a person no longer feels acutely sick, they can resume their daily routine just as before they were sick, and the remaining symptoms (like cough or runny nose) are infrequent or very mild.**

Phase 2: Take additional precautions to limit the spread of respiratory illness for five days after symptoms begin (such as wearing a mask, at-home testing for COVID-19) because you may still be able to expose others to illness that are more likely to become very sick.

March is National Nutrition Month!

National Nutrition Month was started in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

This year's theme is "Beyond the Table," encouraging us to think about the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition – food production, distribution, navigating grocery stores and farmers markets. It also looks at various ways we eat – on the go, in schools and restaurants, at games and events.



Quick tips for eating well on a budget:

Plan for meals and snacks before going shopping. Take an inventory of what ingredients you already have at home – what meals and/or snacks can you make from them? Review recipes and create a shopping list for the items you don't already have at home. Shopping with a list can help avoid buying extras that you don't need for your meal plan. If your grocery store offers the service, try ordering ahead and doing curbside pickup to avoid impulse buys while inside the grocery store to save money. When calculating the cost per serving, pre-packaged foods like packaged pasta, rice mixes or frozen dinners tend to cost more.

Cook more, eat out less. Restaurants can be very expensive, and many foods can be prepared at home for less cost per serving and, because you control what is in the meal, it can be much healthier. Try a few simple, healthy recipes that you and your family enjoy and save restaurant meals for special occasions.

Try frozen veggies if fresh ones aren't sustainable for your household. Many frozen vegetables save time, won't spoil quickly, and are nutritious because they are frozen shortly after picking and retain most of their nutrients (unlike the canning process). Check the packaging for sauces, salt, sugar, or other additives that are added to some frozen vegetables.

Steps you can take to keep food safe at home include:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing or eating food. Cleaning surfaces that are used to prepare foods is also important.
2. Keeping raw foods separate from foods that are already cooked or ready-to-eat. This may involve using different cutting boards and utensils when preparing these foods to prevent what is known as cross-contamination.
3. Cooking foods to their appropriate internal temperature is also needed. Using a food thermometer is the only way to make sure that food is cooked thoroughly and is safe to eat.
4. Refrigerating perishable foods right away helps to keep them out of the Temperature "Danger Zone", where bacteria multiply at a faster rate. Foods left out at room temperature for two hours or longer are unsafe to eat. (One hour if the temperature is 90° Fahrenheit or higher).

For more Home Food Safety Tips, visit eatright.org.



The average lifetime risk of colorectal cancer is **1 in 24!**

According to the latest data, colorectal cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among men under age 50 and the second leading cause of cancer death in women of the same age group.

What can I do to lower my colorectal cancer risk?

- Simple ways to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer include eating healthy, not smoking, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting red meat intake, and adding calcium and vitamin D to your diet.

When and how often should I be screened for colorectal cancer?

- Screening for colorectal cancer should begin at age 45. It is the #1 way to prevent colorectal cancer.
- People who have a first-degree relative (parent, sibling, offspring) with colorectal cancer have two to four times the risk of developing the disease. They should speak to a doctor about getting screened earlier than normal.

What are the symptoms of colorectal cancer?

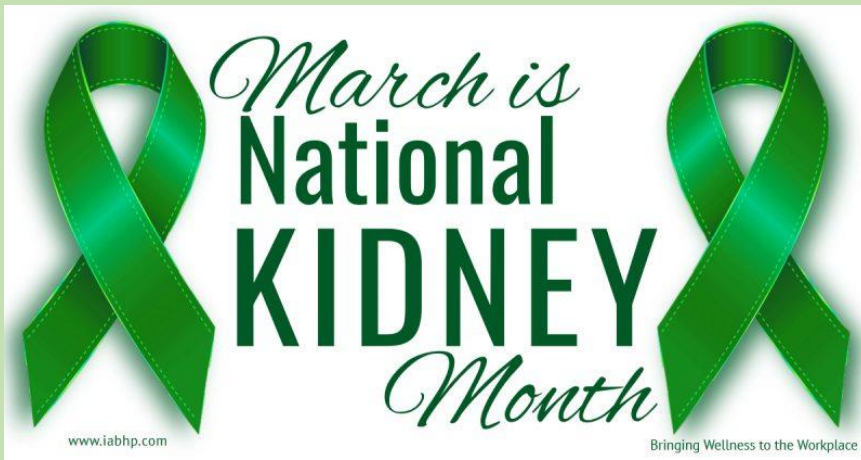
- Colorectal cancer does not commonly show any symptoms in the early stages. When symptoms are present, they may include blood in or on stool, persistent abdominal discomfort, and unexplained weight loss.

How do I get screened for colorectal cancer?

- Most people have screening options, including colonoscopy, stool-DNA, and FIT (fecal immunochemical test). Some screening options can be completed at home. Speak to your primary medical provider to determine which option is best for you.

1/3 of all eligible adults and 80% of adults ages 45-49 are not being screened for colorectal cancer as recommended.

In late 2020, the CDC estimated that 68% of preventable colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented if all eligible people are screened.



The kidneys play important roles to keep us healthy:

- Remove extra water and waste products from our body and produce urine.
- Make and regulate hormones that:
 - help control blood pressure.
 - red blood cell production.
 - calcium uptake from the intestine to help keep bones healthy.

How can I keep my kidneys healthy?

- Get tested for kidney disease.
- Monitor your blood pressure.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Manage blood sugar.
- Manage salt intake.
- Stay well hydrated.
- Speak with your medical provider and pharmacist about over the counter and prescribed medications effect on kidney health before taking.
- If you smoke, work on quitting. If you don't smoke, avoid starting.

To learn more about the kidneys, watch this short video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FN3MFhYPWWo>.