

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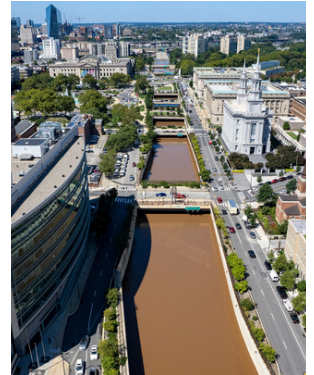
This newsletter is available in Amharic, Arabic, Dari, French, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese at [bit.ly/CRPNnewsletter](https://bit.ly/CRPNnewsletter).

To request free printed copies, visit [bit.ly/PHPMaterials](https://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.

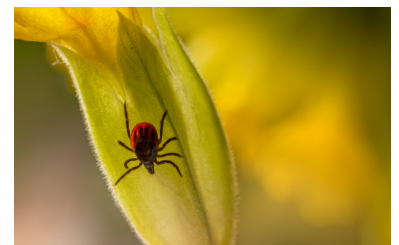


## Vector-Borne Disease

Warmer temperatures and changes in weather patterns can interrupt nature's normal balance.

Philly is getting hotter. Warmer temperatures could bring more mosquitos and ticks, causing more outbreaks of vector-borne diseases.

Learn how to protect yourself and your loved ones from ticks and mosquitoes visit, [bit.ly/Phlfightthebite](https://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](https://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. **Not all ticks have Lyme disease.**

Ticks are usually found in high grass and wooded environments.

### Protect from tick bites

- 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. Pull upward with an even, steady pressure to remove the tick.
2. Clean the area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

**For detailed instructions on how to dispose of live ticks visit [bit.ly/tick\\_removal](https://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.

### Protect from mosquito bites

- **Use bug spray**
  - To find the right insect repellent for you, visit [bit.ly/findrepellent](https://bit.ly/findrepellent).
  - To get safety tips on how to apply insect repellent on children, visit [bit.ly/repellent\\_safety\\_tips](https://bit.ly/repellent_safety_tips).
- **Cover up**
  - Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks to prevent bites.
- **Dump water**
  - Emptying or covering anything near your home that holds water (flowerpots, pet food, water dishes, buckets, etc.) will stop mosquitos from breeding around your home.



## What is West Nile Virus?

- A disease that is spread by the bite of a mosquito.
- **Not all mosquitos 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](https://bit.ly/Mosquito_bites).



# Flooding in Philadelphia

Like most major East Coast cities, Philadelphia is prone to flooding.

Philadelphia experiences 3 types of floods due to heavy rain: flooding from rivers, surface water, and groundwater. Climate change can impact storms making them stronger and more frequent. This increases the chance for flooding in Philadelphia.

For more on flooding in Philadelphia, visit [bit.ly/PWDFlood](https://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](https://bit.ly/MakeAGoBag).
- Sign up with ReadyPhiladelphia for free weather alerts by texting **READYPHILA** to **888-777** or at [bit.ly/ReadyPhila](https://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 contain 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

- For fallen power lines or if you 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 reaction.**

**If you have asthma, mold can trigger asthma attacks.**

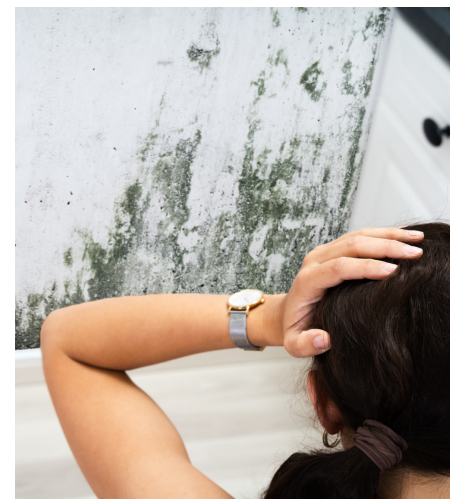
### Prevention

- 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 mask.
- Open doors and windows.
- Use a non-ammonia soap or detergent. **NEVER** mix bleach with ammonia.

For more information on floods and mold, visit [bit.ly/floods\\_cdc](https://bit.ly/floods_cdc).



## Respiratory Viruses

Stay up to date with immunizations. To update your immunity and protect yourself from severe illness, get an annual flu vaccine and an updated COVID-19 vaccine.

**The seasonal flu vaccine** is updated every year to protect against the types of flu expected to be most common.

**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:

- **If you're sick, stay home.**
- Test for COVID if you have any symptoms.
- Wear a mask in crowded public spaces.

**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](https://bit.ly/Covid19_test).

For more information about flu, COVID and RSV, visit [bit.ly/FluPHL](https://bit.ly/FluPHL), [bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL](https://bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL), [bit.ly/RSV\\_PHL](https://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 available.**

Free online screening and resources at [HealthyMindsPhilly.org](https://HealthyMindsPhilly.org).

## Find a Healthcare Provider

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

Use the **Primary Care Finder** at [www.phila.gov/primary-care](https://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](https://bit.ly/PDPHPreparednessOutreach).

For printed copies of this newsletter, questions, or problems with the translation, email us at [PublicHealthPreparedness@phila.gov](mailto: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](https://bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse).

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

