

Public Health Preparedness Newsletter | Spring 2026



Department of
Public Health

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

About This Newsletter

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, infectious diseases, and more.

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

Request free printed copies.



bit.ly/PHPMaterials



Leave a message at 215-683-0806.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Information on
vector-borne
diseases.

Tips for severe
weather safety.

Mental health
resources.

Information on
respiratory
viruses: RSV, Flu,
and COVID-19.

Don't Forget to Sign Up for ReadyPhiladelphia!

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

Alerts are now available in **eleven languages**: English, French, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Swahili, and American Sign Language.

For free text alerts, please text **READYPHILA** to **888-777** or sign up at phila.gov/ready.



Mosquitoes and Ticks in Philadelphia



Warmer temperatures from climate change are shortening winters and lengthening hot summers. This helps vectors like ticks and mosquitoes thrive and spread diseases.



Protect against mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are common in warm weather. Most bites are just itchy, but some can spread germs that make you sick.

Use bug spray

To find the right insect repellent for you, visit bit.ly/findrepellent.

For safety tips on how to apply insect repellent on children, visit bit.ly/repellent_safety_tips.

Dump water

Empty or cover still water, like flowerpots, buckets, or bird baths, to stop mosquitoes from breeding near your home.

Cover up

Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks to prevent bites.

Mosquitoes in Philadelphia can carry West Nile Virus.

- Most infected people won't get sick, but some may develop fever and flu-like symptoms. In rare cases, they can have inflammation or swelling of the brain.

People 50 and older are at the highest risk for severe disease and death.

- If you or a family member have unexplained headaches, weakness, or fatigue, talk to your primary care provider.

For more information on mosquitoes and West Nile Virus, visit bit.ly/FightTheBitePhilly.

Protect against ticks

Ticks in Philadelphia can carry Lyme disease. This infection comes from germs ticks have. You usually find ticks in parks, yards with tall grass, or wooded areas.

Prevent tick bites

- Use an EPA-approved repellent.
- Stay on the center of trails.
- Shower and check your body and clothes for ticks.



Remove the tick right away, or within 24 hours. A tick needs to be attached for 24-72 hours to pass Lyme disease to humans.

Removing ticks

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to pull upward on the tick's head with steady pressure.
- Clean the area with alcohol or soap and water.

For detailed instructions on removing ticks visit bit.ly/Safe_TickRemoval.

Seek medical care right away if you can't remove a tick, or if you get a fever or a red, circular rash around the bite.

Flooding in Philadelphia

Flooding risk in Philadelphia is rising and will likely continue to grow.

Climate change causes higher sea levels, stronger storms, and heavy rainfall. This results in more frequent floods and greater health risks, including mold-related respiratory issues, vector-borne diseases, and storm-related injuries.

Preparing for a Flood

- Keep a battery-operated AM/FM radio tuned to a local station.
- Create an emergency 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 phila.gov/ready.

During and After a Flood

Avoid flood waters. They may contain harmful germs, chemicals, and trash.

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

If you lose power

- Discard food if the refrigerator has been off for more than four hours.
- Replace medications that need refrigeration.

If you see fallen power lines or smell gas, call PECO's emergency line at 1-800-841-4141.



Mold Prevention and Cleanup

Mold can cause eye and skin irritation and allergic reactions.

If you have asthma, mold can trigger asthma attacks.

For more information on flooding, visit bit.ly/PWDFlood.

Prevention

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

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/FloodSafetyandMoldFree.

Protect Your Health

Respiratory Viruses

Respiratory viruses continue to spread through the spring. Stay protected by getting vaccinated.

Help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

- If you have symptoms, test for COVID-19 and the flu, if possible.
- Wear a mask in crowded public spaces.
- Stay home if you feel sick.

Find more information on respiratory viruses.

- bit.ly/Covid19_test
- bit.ly/FluPHL
- bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL
- bit.ly/PHLVax

Bird Flu

Bird flu, or H5, is a viral infection spread mainly by contact with wild birds, poultry, or other animals. In Philadelphia, the risk to humans is low, but it's still important to take precautions.

- Do not touch sick or dead birds or animals.
- Wash your hands after visiting farms or petting zoos.
- For more information, visit bit.ly/BirdFlu2025.

Primary Care

Find free or low-cost medical care, even if you do not have insurance.

- phila.gov/primary-care

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.

Mental Health Resources

Reach out 24/7 (interpretation available).

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text 988

Free online screening and resources

- HealthyMindsPhilly.org



You are not alone.
ASKING FOR HELP IS OK.

Stay Connected





Visit our website.

 bit.ly/PDPHPreparednessOutreach

Request a resource table or training.

Contact us for copies of this newsletter, questions, or problems with the translation.

 PublicHealthPreparedness@phila.gov

 Leave a message at 215-683-0806.

Sign up for the Community Response Partner Network (CRPN).

 bit.ly/CRPNnewsletters

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