

November 2023

# Public Health Nurse Newsletter

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Find us Online at:

[www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com](http://www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com)

As it gets chilly outside, the days get shorter. Daylight savings ends in November, and our clocks "fall back." Don't forget to turn your clocks back an hour on November 5, 2023, at 2:00 am!

The holidays are a happy and festive time for most people, but not for everyone. Please be kind and considerate of those experiencing mental health struggles, loss, economic hardships, or other difficulties.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get an updated COVID-19 vaccine and this season's annual flu vaccine.

*If you are looking for local flu and COVID-19 vaccine clinics the following are coming up. Please use the links listed for each clinic to pre-register:*

1. Belchertown Senior Center, 60 State Street, Belchertown, MA on 11/6/2023 at 9:00 am  
<https://tinyurl.com/34httdch>
2. Quabbin Wire and Cable Co., 10 Maple Street, Ware, MA on 11/7/2023 6:30 am – 9:30 am  
<https://tinyurl.com/ycyb6jza>
3. Brimfield Senior Center, 20 Main Street, Brimfield, MA on 11/8/2023 at 9:00 am – 12:00 pm  
<https://tinyurl.com/2eabb38v>
4. Emelia K. Hope Community Center, 173 North Main Street, North Brookfield, MA on 11/12/2023 from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm  
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8smmw7>
5. Palmer Public Library, 1455 North Main Street, Palmer, MA on 11/16/2023 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm  
<https://tinyurl.com/2ehkf2mn>

The vaccine clinics are sponsored by Healthy Quabog and the Rural Vaccine Equity Initiative. For more information, please call: Arianna Palano at (413) 478-2526 or email at [apalano@townofware.com](mailto:apalano@townofware.com).

Thank you and have a healthy and safe  
November!

# NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH!!



Diabetes is a chronic medical condition affecting how your body uses food for energy. Your body breaks down a significant amount of the food you eat into sugar (glucose) and sends it out into your bloodstream. When blood sugar levels rise, your pancreas receives a signal to release insulin. Insulin is the body's way of getting blood sugar into the body's cells to use as energy.

In those with diabetes, the body can't use the insulin it makes, or it doesn't make enough. When cells stop responding to insulin, or there isn't enough available, high amounts of sugar remain in your bloodstream. Over time, diabetes causes other serious problems including heart disease, kidney disease, vascular diseases, and vision loss.

There is no cure yet for diabetes, but losing weight, healthy and nutritious diet, and staying active can really help. If you do have diabetes, following the treatment plan and diet that you and your medical provider agree on is an important step in managing the disease and decreasing your risk of developing other chronic health conditions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html>

(Source: CDC.org, 2023)

## Who should be screened for diabetes?

The United States preventative services task force (USPSTF) recommends screening for adults who are overweight or obese starting at age 35.

Additionally, screening every three years is recommended for adults under age 35 who are overweight and have additional risk factors, including:

- physical inactivity
- first-degree relative with diabetes
- member of a high-risk ethnic population (e.g., Black/African, American, Latino, Native American, Asian American, Pacific Islander)
- delivered a baby weighing greater than 9 pounds or diagnosed with gestational diabetes.
- hypertension / high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- polycystic ovarian syndrome

## What is COPD?

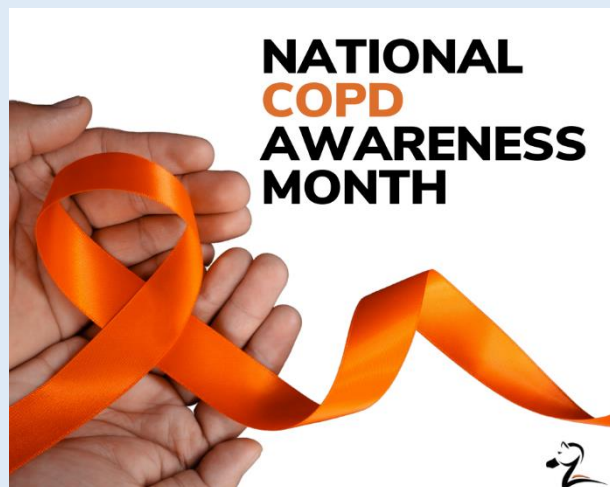
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is a chronic disease affecting the lungs that occurs when there is damage to the airways or other lung tissues blocking airflow and making it harder to breathe.

There are two conditions in the United States that are classified as COPD:

**Emphysema** develops when there is damage to the walls between many of the air sacs in the lungs.

**Chronic bronchitis** is caused by repeated or constant irritation and inflammation in the lining of the airways.

(Source: NIH.org)



## How can I prevent COPD?

As many as 8 out of 10 COPD-related deaths occur due to smoking tobacco products (cigarettes, pipes, cigars)

The best way to prevent developing COPD is not to smoke or try to quit if you already do smoke.

Avoid second-hand smoke whenever possible.

Talk to your medical provider about programs and products that can help you quit.

Ask your medical provider to refer you to Quit Works, which is the Massachusetts Quitline that provides support as you begin the process of quitting smoking – you don't have to go it alone!

Try participating in the Great American Smokeout! This year, it occurs on November 16<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every November) and is a great day to begin your journey to being smoke free.


For more information, please visit:


<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/great-american-smokeout.html>

## How common is COPD?

COPD is:

 the **6th** leading cause of death in the U.S.

 the cause of more than **140,000** deaths per year

 more than **2x** as common in rural areas as in large cities

[nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter](http://nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter)



NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

LEARN MORE  
BREATHE BETTER



**U.S. Antibiotic  
Awareness Week is  
November 18-24, 2023.**

#BeAntibioticsAware

### **Important Information about Antibiotics:**

- **Antibiotics can save lives** when taken for the right reasons as directed.
- **Antibiotics do NOT treat viruses.**
- **Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria, but even some bacterial infections get better without antibiotics.** Antibiotics are not needed for treating many sinus infections and some ear infections.
- **An antibiotic will not make you feel better if you have a virus.** Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two without treatment.
- **When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still cause harm.** Side effects range from very minor to very severe health problems and should only be taken when needed.
- **Taking antibiotics can contribute to the development of antimicrobial resistance.** Antimicrobial resistance occurs when germs like bacteria and fungi develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them.
- **If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.** Complete the full course unless otherwise directed by your medical provider.
- **Talk with your healthcare professional if you develop any side effects,** especially severe diarrhea, which could be *Clostridioides difficile* (or *C. diff*) infection, a condition that requires immediate treatment.
- **Do your best to stay healthy and keep others healthy. This helps reduce antibiotic use and fights antimicrobial resistance:**
  - Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is best, use a hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the bend of your elbow.
  - Stay at home when sick.
  - Avoid touching your face.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Get recommended vaccines, such as the flu and COVID-19 vaccines.
- **Antibiotics aren't always the answer.** Improving how we take antibiotics helps keep us healthy now, helps fight antimicrobial resistance, and ensures that these life-saving antibiotics will be available for future generations.

Check out this video to learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVjMMEBjfxU>

(Source: CDC, gov)