



## Did you know?

**Patriot's Day** was originally celebrated on April 19<sup>th</sup> – to commemorate the battles of Lexington and Concord, fought near Boston on April 19, 1775. In Massachusetts, it is a state holiday observed yearly on the third Monday in April. It is also the day the Boston Marathon has been traditionally held since 1897, making it the oldest marathon in the country!

As we head into springtime, it's time to think about being outside and protecting ourselves!

## Ticks

Black-legged ticks (aka deer ticks) can spread Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, *Borrelia miyamotoi*, and Powassan virus. Young (nymph) and adult black-legged ticks will bite humans, and the highest risk of bites is throughout the spring, summer, and fall. Adults, though, can be out looking for a host any time winter temperatures are above freezing.

## Mosquitos

51 different kinds of mosquitos have been found in Massachusetts! Only female mosquitos bite for blood, which they use to make eggs. Both male and female mosquitos use fruit juices and plant nectars as their main source of food. Most mosquitos are active from just before dusk, and overnight until dawn. In Massachusetts, the diseases linked to mosquitoes are West Nile virus (WNV) and eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus.

How can we protect ourselves? Use EPA-registered insect repellants as directed on their packaging, wear clothing treated with permethrin (never use permethrin directly on skin and reduce areas where mosquitos can breed by emptying sources of standing water!

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## Quabbin Health District Public Health Nurse Newsletter



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# Protecting, Connecting and Thriving

## *We Are All Public Health*

APRIL 1-7, 2024



Each year, during the first week of April, the American Public Health Association (APHA) brings together communities across the United States to observe National Public Health Week as a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving our nation's health.

### Important messages from public health week:

- **Reproductive and Sexual Health**

- Get tested for STIs regularly, practice safe sex, get screened for cancers.
- For HIV testing sites & care services locally, visit: <https://www.hiv.gov/locator>.
- See your primary care provider or visit Tapestry for STI testing and treatment resources at: <https://www.tapestryhealth.org/sexual-and-reproductive-health/>.

- **Emergency Preparedness**

- Build an emergency supply kit, have an action/evacuation plan with your family, friends, or household.
- For emergency preparedness tips and information, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-emergency-management-agency>.

- **Future of Public Health**

- Get involved in community organizations, advocate for policies that promote the health and well-being of your community.

Public health “promotes and protects the health of all people and their communities” (APHA, 2024).

Public health nurses (PHN) “promote and protect the health of populations utilizing nursing, social, and public health sciences” (APHN, 2022).

To learn more about public health, and how it benefits the community, check out this short video: <https://youtu.be/oy1CAMObRzc>.

**Alcohol use disorder** is a pattern of alcohol use involving difficulty controlling your drinking, preoccupation with alcohol, or continuing to use alcohol even when it causes problems. This disorder also involves having to drink more to get the same effect or having withdrawal symptoms when you rapidly decrease or stop drinking (Mayo Clinic, 2022).



***Unhealthy alcohol use includes any alcohol use that puts your health or safety at risk or causes other alcohol-related problems. It also includes binge drinking*** — a pattern of drinking where a male has five or more drinks within two hours, or a female has at least four drinks within two hours. Binge drinking causes significant health and safety risks including injury, STIs, acute inflammation of the pancreas, stomach, or liver, and can lead to chronic liver disease, heart disease, unintentional injuries, alcohol use disorder, and more.

*According to the NIH (2024), of the 98,457 liver disease deaths among people ages 12 and older in 2022, 46.0% involved alcohol. Among males, 60,412 liver disease deaths occurred, with 48.6% involving alcohol. Among females, 38,063 liver disease deaths occurred, with 41.8% involving alcohol.*

### **Where can you find help?**

- Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline
  - Available 24/7 at 800-327-5050, text 800327, or visit HelplineMA.org.
- Massachusetts Behavioral Health Helpline
  - Available 24/7, call or text 833-773-2445, or chat at masshelpline.com/chat
  - Deaf or hard of hearing? Contact MassRelay at 711
- Visit 413 Cares for substance use, mental health, and many other resources
  - Online at 413cares.org
- For individual support
  - [Mass 2-1-1](#).
  - If in Franklin or Hampshire Counties, you can call Community Action Pioneer Valley at [413-475-1570](#).

For more information, visit: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alcohol-use-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20369243>.