

# Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

[www.middlebrookhealth.org](http://www.middlebrookhealth.org)

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## May 2024 Newsletter

### Mental Health Month

May is Mental Health Month, and the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission is raising awareness of the important role mental health plays in our lives. We are encouraging members of the community to take action toward protecting their mental health and overall well-being.



We live in a rapidly changing world that can be complex to navigate. About half of Americans can remember a time when we were not constantly connected, while the younger half of the population can't imagine life without the internet.

Modern life can have a significant impact on mental health — for better or for worse. While our devices make us more connected than ever, loneliness is an increasingly serious public health concern. We are now able to have conversations with friends and family on the other side of the world in real time. However, constant connection does not mean we are less lonely. Recent survey data show that more than half of U.S. adults (58%) are lonely.

Finding a sense of calm and focusing on well-being when you are having mental health concerns can be daunting in our fast-paced society. It can be especially challenging to know where to start. If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition and are unsure of where to start, take a free, private mental health test at [mhascreening.org](http://mhascreening.org) to determine next steps.

Source: Mental Health America

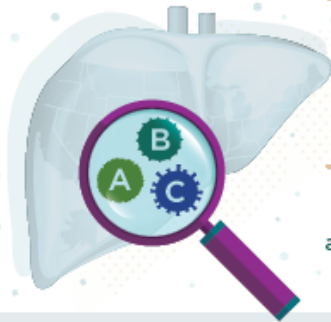
If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org).

To learn how to get support for mental health, drug, and alcohol issues, visit [FindSupport.gov](http://FindSupport.gov).

To locate treatment facilities or providers, visit [FindTreatment.gov](http://FindTreatment.gov) or call SAMHSA's National Helpline at 800-662-HELP (4357).

# CDC IS COMMITTED TO ADVANCING VIRAL HEPATITIS ELIMINATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Viral Hepatitis is a **Serious Public Health Crisis** in the United States.



**44,910**

cases of **hepatitis A** reported by 37 states related to outbreaks of person-to-person transmission during 2016–2023

**660,000**

adults estimated to have **hepatitis B\*** based on 2017–March 2020 data

**More than 2 million**

adults estimated to have **hepatitis C\*\*** based on 2017–March 2020 data

Viral Hepatitis can be **Prevented, Treated, and Cured.**

**Despite the availability of**

**vaccines to prevent hepatitis A and hepatitis B, treatment to control hepatitis B, and**

**a cure to eliminate hepatitis C,**

**the number of people infected with these viruses is too high.**

**Many people with viral hepatitis are unaware of their infection.**



**1 out of 2**  
people with hepatitis B



**1 out of 3**  
people with hepatitis C

**Most people with viral hepatitis do not have symptoms. Untreated, hepatitis B and hepatitis C can cause liver cancer and death.**



**Testing** is the first step to receiving **life-saving treatment**. **All adults** should be tested for hepatitis B and hepatitis C.



\*Bilder D, Barker L, Lewis K, Peretz L, Testale E. Prevalence and awareness of Hepatitis B virus infection in the United States: January 2017–March 2020. *Hepatology Commun*. 2023 Mar 30;7(4):e01018. doi: 10.1093/hc9.0000000000001018

\*\*Lewis KC, Barker LK, Jiles R, Gupta N. Estimated prevalence and awareness of hepatitis C virus infection among U.S. adults—National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, January 2017–March 2020. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2023 Jul 7;ciad411. doi: 10.1093/cid/ciad411



## All populations are affected by viral hepatitis.

Viral hepatitis takes a heavy toll on people who are disconnected from health systems.

People who inject drugs have the highest rates of new hepatitis B and hepatitis C infections.

Asian/Pacific Islander persons have the highest rates of hepatitis B-related deaths.

American Indian and Black persons have the highest rates of hepatitis C-related deaths.

To end the public health threat of viral hepatitis, CDC works with communities, health care providers, and health departments to improve access to viral hepatitis prevention, testing, treatment, and care services in the United States.



Viral Hepatitis Is a Public Health Crisis in the United States, **Killing Thousands** of Americans and **Costing** the U.S. Health Care System Hundreds of Millions of Dollars Each Year.



Vaccination against hepatitis B is cost-saving to the health care system and leads the nation toward hepatitis B elimination.

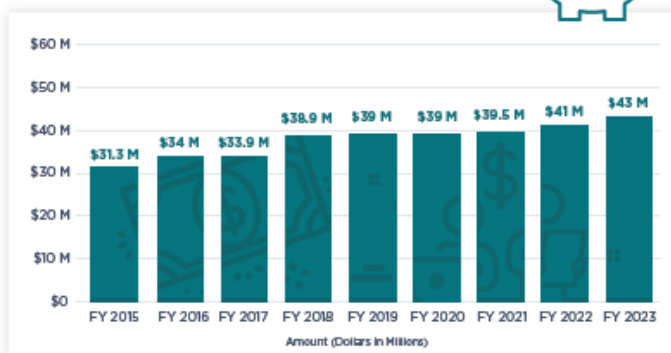


Testing for hepatitis B and hepatitis C is cost-effective.



Curing people with hepatitis C saves lives, and is cost-saving to the health care system.

## Appropriated Funding for CDC Viral Hepatitis Program



Current investments in viral hepatitis will enable us to make progress; however, **achieving national viral hepatitis elimination goals will be difficult without transformational plans** ensuring that core viral hepatitis surveillance, prevention, testing, and treatment services are widely available for all populations.

Source: CDC



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## Sun Safety and Skin Cancer Prevention

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The warmer months are finally here, and spending time outside is a great way to be active, reduce stress, and get vitamin D. Enjoy your favorite activities outdoors while being sun safe! Too much sun exposure can damage skin which may lead to painful sunburn, skin cancer and premature skin aging. The ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is dangerous, and sometimes unexpected. Even on cloudy days, UV rays can cause skin to burn. Did you know, having 5 or more sunburns doubles your risk for melanoma? Protect the skin you are in!

### How to Prevent Sunburn:

**Use Sunscreen:** Apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30+. Reapply every two hours.

**Wear a Hat and Sunglasses:** Put on a wide-brimmed hat to shade your face, neck, and ears. Remember to wear your sunglasses to protect your eyes from UV rays.

**Wear Protective Clothing:** Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing that covers your skin.

**Time it Right:** Plan your outdoor activities before 10 am or after 4 pm to avoid the strongest sun rays.

**Seek Shade:** When the sun is at its peak, find shade under a tree, umbrella, or any other cool spot. It'll provide extra protection.

### How to Treat Sunburn:

1. Apply a cool, damp cloth to the sunburned area for relief.
2. Moisturize! Use a gentle moisturizer or aloe vera gel to soothe the burn and keep your skin hydrated.
3. Stay Hydrated and drink plenty of water to help your body recover from the sunburn.
4. Avoid being out in the sun until the burn has healed
5. If your skin blisters, do not break the blister because that may increase the risk of infection. Lightly bandage or cover the area with gauze to prevent infection. If the blister breaks, apply antiseptic ointment.

Protection from the sun is important all year around, not just during the summer. Sun damage affects people of all skin tones. Overexposure to the sun can lead to skin cancer. Be proactive against skin cancer:

- **Daily:** Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30+ each day.
- **Monthly:** Each month, take 15 minutes to check your skin head to toe. If you find anything new, changing or unusual on your skin, see a dermatologist.
- **Annually:** See a dermatologist once a year or more, depending on your [risk of skin cancer](#)

For more information, visit: [www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-prevention/](http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-prevention/)

Source: The Skin Cancer Foundation

# Fight The Bite

Ticks can spread germs that make you sick! Take steps to prevent tick-borne illness.

## Before going outside:



**Know where ticks live** - Many people encounter ticks in their own yard or neighborhood. Ticks are found in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas. As we spend more time outside during the warmer months of the year, avoid wooded and brushy areas and walk in center of trails.



**Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents** - Repellents such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE) can repel ticks. You can find the product that best suits your needs using the [EPA's search tool](#). Always follow the product label instructions.



**Treat your Clothes** - Permethrin is an EPA-registered insecticide that kills ticks on contact. Permethrin is safe for people when used according to the product label instructions. Permethrin treated clothes can last through multiple washings.

## After coming inside:



**Check your clothing and gear for ticks** - Ticks are tricky! They often hitch rides on hats, clothing, and any gear you bring along outside. Carefully inspect these items to prevent tick bites when you least expect them.



**Shower as soon as possible after being outdoors** - Showering within two hours after being outside can help find and wash away unattached ticks.

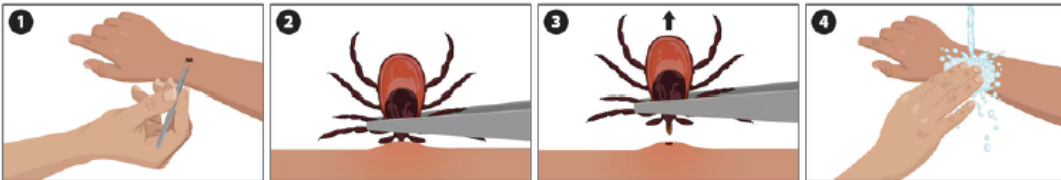


**Protect your pets** - Ticks can easily latch onto pets and bring them into your home. Use tick preventatives recommended by your veterinarian, and regularly check your pets for ticks.



**Perform regular tick checks** - After spending time outdoors, thoroughly check your body and clothing for ticks. Pay close attention to areas such as the scalp, behind the ears, under the arms, around the waist, between the legs, and back of the knees.

## If you find an attached tick, follow these steps:



1. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. & 3. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth easily with tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
4. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

## How to safely dispose of a live tick:

- Never crush a tick with your fingers.
- Put it in alcohol
  - Place it in a sealed bag/container
  - Wrap it tightly in tape
  - Flush it down the toilet

## Visit your healthcare provider if:

If you get a tick bite and develop symptoms within a few weeks, visit your healthcare provider. The most common symptoms of tick-related illness include fever/chills, aches and pains, and rashes.

For more information, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/fight-the-bite/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/fight-the-bite/index.html)



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# MANGO SALSA

## *Ingredients*

- 1 mango (peeled, pitted, and diced, or 1 cup thawed frozen chunks)
- 1 tablespoon onion, red (diced)
- cilantro (1 tablespoon, optional, fresh or dried)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons lime juice (bottled or fresh)



*Makes 8 servings*

*This sweet and tangy salsa pairs perfectly with grilled or baked fish.*

## *Directions*

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Combine all ingredients in a bowl.
3. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

For more recipes, visit: [www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

**Follow the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission on Social Media!**

