

The Talk of the Town

Brought to you by the Pequannock Township Health Department
Serving the Town of Boonton, Florham Park, Kinnelon, Pequannock, and Riverdale

RING IN SPRING!

RESTORE WITH THE OUTDOORS^{1,2,3}

As the seasons change, consider how nature can nurture in more ways than one! It can be harder and harder to unplug from the trying parts of life, but science has shown that getting outdoors can give you an advantage against stress. In fact, research tells us that spending more time in and around green space has a three-fold boost: it helps our brains bloom, our bodies blossom, and our moods warm. For physical wellness, several studies noticed that people who spent more time in nature had lower cortisol levels, less muscle tension, lower heart rates and blood pressures, and better heart disease outcomes. Additionally, spending time outside can raise your vitamin D levels, meaning stronger bones, blood cells, and immune systems. For mental and emotional wellness, scientists found that adding nature to your routine increased happiness, supported positive social interactions, and a created a fuller sense of meaning and purpose in life. There was even a bonus to our attention and focus! So, when you can, take that walk in the woods. While we know that walking is healthy for us, simply spending time al fresco is enough. For added benefits, invite a friend along. Connection is another great way to care for your mental health, as it can cultivate resilience and lengthen your life. Explore options near you, like trails or parks. And, remember, start small and give yourself grace. Some time outside is better than none. And, if you can't get outside, some research reveals that looking at images of nature can still have a positive effect! There are so many ways to soak up the spring and bask in the healing effects it brings.



SAVOR THE SEASON^{4,5,6,7}

April showers bring May flowers, but let's not forget that besides flowers, they also usher in colorful fruits and vegetables! It's a no-brainer to eat seasonally when you live in the Garden State. Put simply, eating seasonally means that you eat produce which is grown during that time of year. Often, this makes those foods cheaper, more accessible, sustainably savvy, and better for you. Foods that are in-season are usually naturally highest in nutrients and packed with fresher flavor. Once picked, they can quickly lose vitamins and antioxidants but despite this, you can still reap the nutritional rewards of fruits and vegetables year-round. Research shows that eating fruits and vegetables can lower the risk of heart attack and other types of heart diseases, curb inflammation, and improve gut and brain health. The USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit and 3 to 4 cups of vegetables per day for adults. Here are a few foods which are in-season in New Jersey for most of April, May, and June: arugula, asparagus, cherries, chives, mint, mushrooms, rhubarb, spinach, and strawberries. Discover more with the Seasonal Food Guide website, linked [here](#). With that, we hope you get fresh and fancy by bringing farm-to-table to your home this spring. Check out the featured healthy recipe for more inspiration!



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Atlantic Health System
Morristown Medical Center

HIGHLIGHTS OF HAPPENINGS

HALOS FOR ANGELS PICKLEBALL FUNDRAISER

Hosted at the Pat and B.J. Highland Memorial Tennis Courts in Florham Park in a round robin format.
Saturday, May 10th
10:00am-2:00pm
Click [here](#) to register.

ZOOM MEDITATION

Build connection, confidence, and trust with yourself. All experience levels welcome. Held as an online session through Zoom.
Tuesday, April 1st
7:00pm-8:00pm
Register at kinnelonlibrary.org/calendar

HISTORY WALKING TOUR

Join Joe Macasek for a walking tour of the Canal & Ironworks. Tour starts at the Boonton Historical Society and Museum (210 Main Street).
Sunday, April 6th
Begins at 1:30pm
Call (973) 402-8840 for more details.

CHC CLINICS

This program offers well child care and free federally funded vaccines to children for the communities which we serve. For more information and dates of the Child Health Conference, please contact the Pequannock Public Health Nurses at 973-835-5700 X 109 or 135.

RABIES CLINICS

Rabies clinics are available in Morris County throughout 2025 and are available at no cost to NJ residents. Visit the link below for more information:
<https://www.morriscountynj.gov/Residents/Public-Safety/Rabies-Clinics>

ANNUAL RIVERBANK CLEANUP

Donate as much or as little time as you can to clean up Pequannock's waters.
Saturday, April 12th
9:00am-1:00pm
Email ptec@pewtwp.org to sign-up.



LOCALS HELPING LOCALS

FLORHAM PARK FOOD PANTRY

Located at Holy Family Parish in Florham Park
Contact Anne Platoff at 973-822-0430 or Sharon Carr at 973-568-5932
<https://holyfamilyfp.org/food-pantry>

KINNELON FOOD PANTRY

Located at Church of the Nazarene in Kinnelon
Contact the church at (973) 838-1027
<https://www.kinnelonboro.org/cn/webpage.cfm?tpid=8915>

LOAVES & FISHES COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

Located at the First Presbyterian Church in Boonton
Contact Marjorie B. Roller at marjorie.roller@lfcfp.org or (862) 222-3006
<https://www.lfcfp.org/>

PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP FOOD PANTRY

Located in Friendship Hall at the First Reformed Church in Pequannock
Contact the church at (973) 835-1145
<https://firstreformedchurch.com/connect/food-pantry-/>

RIVERDALE FOOD PANTRY

Located at the Riverdale Community Center in Riverdale
Contact Darinda Norris at (973) 714-7141 or Michael Carelli at media@riverdalenj.gov
<https://www.riverdalenj.gov/pages/riverdale-food-pantry>

THE TOWN OF BOONTON FOOD PANTRY

Located in the Former Bank Building next to Town Hall (100 Washington Street)
Contact Lucille Rockis or Grace Ryerson at (973) 402-9410 ext. 634
<https://www.boonton.org/630/Food-Pantries-Financial-Assistance>

HEALTHY RECIPES FOR RECIPIENTS

PASTA PACKED WITH A SEASONAL PUNCH

INGREDIENTS

For Pasta Portion:

- 1 lb whole wheat farfalle pasta
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 1/2 cup fresh peas (may substitute for frozen, if needed)
- 1 carton of mushrooms
- 1 bunch of asparagus, chopped
- 1 bunch of Swiss or rainbow chard, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste

For Sauce and Garnish:

- 1/2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 stalk of chives, chopped
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Dash of salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp oregano
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup fresh dill

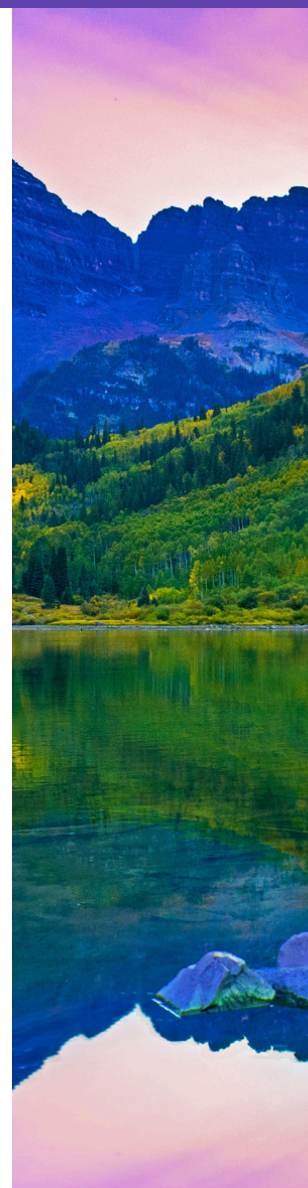
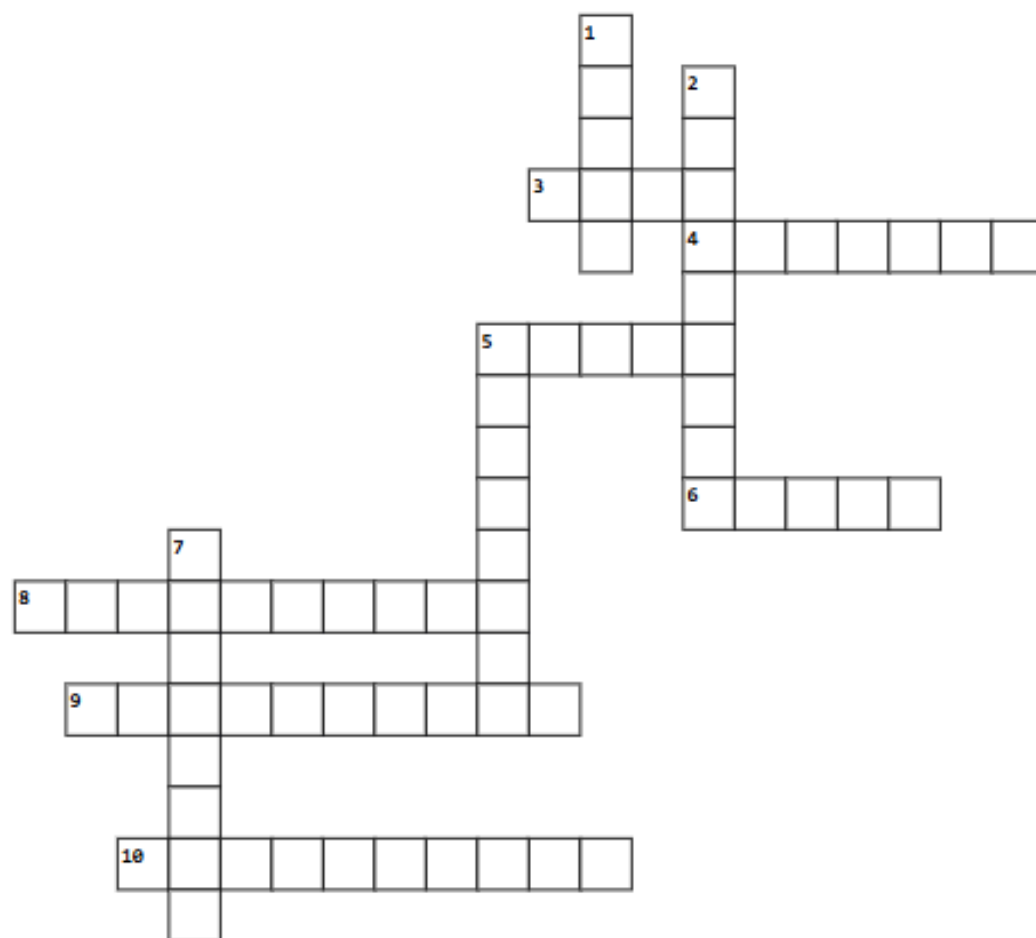
DIRECTIONS

(Serves 6-8)

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. While waiting, shell peas into a colander and rinse them. Once boiling, cook the pasta according to package instructions. In the last minute of cooking, add the peas to the pot with the pasta. Drain and set aside.**
 2. While the pasta and peas cook, heat 1/2 tbsp of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the mushrooms, asparagus, and chard, along with a dash of salt and pepper, until fork tender.
 3. In a bowl, whisk together the remaining olive oil, lemon juice, chives, lemon zest, salt, pepper, and oregano. Adjust to taste.
 4. Toss pasta, peas, vegetables, and dill with the lemon olive oil sauce until combined and well-coated. Garnish with a sprinkle of grated Parmesan cheese and serve.
- **Note:** While not as fresh, you may also use frozen peas in this recipe. If frozen, add the peas in the last 3 minutes of cooking the pasta.

Check your
local farms for
the freshest
produce!

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 3 - In-season spring herb that's great in mojitos
- 4 - Type of chard you can use in this quarter's recipe
- 5 - Type of contact which spreads Mpox
- 6 - Other type of chard you can use in this quarter's recipe
- 8 - Where you can check for the freshest produce to use in the featured recipe
- 9 - Sport being played for the Halos for Angels fundraiser
- 10 - Town hosting their annual riverbank cleanup in April

DOWN

- 1 - Month in which the Boonton Historical Society's walking tour is offered
- 2 - In-season foods are usually naturally highest in this
- 5 - Studies noticed that time spent in nature lowered levels of this
- 7 - Best tool for preventing getting and spreading measles

Ready for the answers? Email your Health Educator, Cassidy Dock, at CDock@Peqtwp.org to find out!



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UPDATES & RESOURCES

MEASLES⁸

Measles is a viral disease which is highly contagious. It spreads through the air when a person with measles talks, coughs, or sneezes. You can recognize it by its distinct skin spots and by the fever it causes. At this time, there is no medical treatment for measles. Once sick, you must let the disease play out. As of February 2025, 3 cases of measles have been confirmed in New Jersey so far. Of these cases, all 3 had not received a measles vaccine. If you have had measles or were vaccinated against measles, you are probably immune. Vaccines are still the best tool to prevent getting and spreading measles. Check your vaccination status today.

MPOX^{9,10}

Mpox, formerly known as Monkeypox, often starts as a flu-like illness with a distinct rash. This rash can look like pimples or blisters and can be spread through close contact, usually skin-to-skin. This may develop close to or on the genitals or anus, but can also be on areas like the hands, feet, chest, face, and mouth. On average, it lasts up to 2-4 weeks. Because of the way it spreads, anyone can get Mpox. However, certain populations are sometimes more at-risk, such as men who have sex with men, people with weakened immune systems, elderly persons, and pregnant people. Talk with your healthcare provider about whether a vaccine may be right for you.

SOURCES

1. Mental Health America. (n.d.). *The 10 Tools for Resiliency - Connect with Others*. <https://www.mhanational.org/connect-others>
2. UC Davis Health. (2023, May 3). *3 ways getting outside into nature helps improve your health*. <https://health.ucdavis.edu/blog/cultivating-health/3-ways-getting-outside-into-nature-helps-improve-your-health/2023/05#:~:text=Nature%20can%20help%20decrease%20your,and%20improve%20concentration%20and%20attention.>
3. Weir, K. (2020, April 1). *Nurtured by nature*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>
4. Cavalier, A. (2023, March 21). *4 Reasons to Eat Seasonally This Spring*. National Breast Cancer Foundation. <https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/blog/4-reasons-to-eat-seasonally-this-spring/>
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6. Mayo Clinic. (n.d.). *Picked at their peak: The benefits of buying seasonal produce*. <https://diet.mayoclinic.org/us/blog/2022/picked-at-their-peak-the-benefits-of-buying-seasonal-produce/>
7. Merschel, M. (2024, July 12). *The ripe stuff: Why seasonal eating can be a healthy delight*. American Heart Association. <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2024/07/12/why-seasonal-eating-can-be-a-healthy-delight#:~:text=And%20seasonal%20eating%20also%20offers,a%20wider%20variety%20of%20nutrients.%22>
8. Cleveland Clinic. (2023, November 16). *Measles*. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/8584-measles>
9. Massachusetts Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences. (n.d.). *Mpox*. Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services. <https://www.mass.gov/mpox>
10. Tennessee Department of Health. (n.d.). *Mpox (Monkeypox)*. <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/reportable-diseases/monkeypox.html>

MENTAL HEALTH

- [Morris County Human Services](#)
- [Passaic County Human Services](#)
- [New Jersey Human Services: 1-800-985-5990](#)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration 24 Hour Hotline: 1-800-985-5990
- [Suicide and Crisis Line: 988](#)
 - Available for texts or calls

COVID-19

- [NJDOH Dashboard](#)
- [Statewide and Regional COVID Activity Report and Risk Level by County](#)
- [Morris County-Based](#)
- [Atlantic Health Testing Sites](#)
- [Atlantic Health Vaccination](#)



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