

Keeping New Jersey Healthy



Commissioner O'Dowd helps celebrate National Health Center Week at the Henry J. Austin Health Center in Trenton on August 12.

Celebrating Health Centers, WIC & Improved Breastfeeding Rates

By Mary E. O'Dowd, MPH, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health

This summer we celebrated the 40th anniversary of New Jersey's Women, Infant & Children's (WIC) program the comprehensive care provided in our community health centers and significant improvement in the breastfeeding rates of New Jersey mothers.

As part of National Health Center Week (August 10-16), Governor Chris Christie signed a proclamation describing health centers as a model of "an effective means of overcoming barriers to access for the medically underserved and in doing so, improving health care outcomes and reducing health care costs."

To share his message across the state, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno and Assistant Commissioner Gloria Rodriguez joined the Newark Community Health Center for a ribbon cutting of its new \$10.4 million facility. Trenton Mayor Eric Jackson and I attended the Community Health and Wellness Fair at the Henry J. Austin Health Center, and Carla Carter from the Department's Office of Primary Care attended the ground breaking ceremony for the reconstruction of the South Jersey Family Medical Center's facility in Burlington City.

New Jersey's 20 community health centers, and their 108 licensed facilities, will provide care to 480,000 patients during 1.5 million visits this year. During National Health Center Week, more than 80 health fairs, picnics and other wellness events took place; and thousands of New Jersey residents received free health screenings, HIV testing, nutrition and health education, and information about the WIC program.

WIC is one of the nation's most successful public health programs. It has improved the health and nutritional status of tens of thousands of New Jersey families over the past 40 years.

To celebrate WIC's 40th Anniversary, we have launched a campaign to increase public awareness of WIC benefits such as one-on-one counseling, classes on shopping for nutritious foods on a budget, and cooking and eating healthy during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

More than 170,000 women and children up to age five are currently participating in New Jersey's program. But, we estimate that up to 40,000 more women and children may be eligible. WIC serves families up to 185% of the federal poverty income guidelines.

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Video: WIC 40th Anniversary Video.

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Jersey Fresh Farmers Markets in Full Swing for Summer

by NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher



Commissioner O'Dowd, Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher and Patricia Dombroski, USDA Food and Nutrition Service Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator, sample juice from a vendor at the Delran Farmers Market.

Farmers bring what they grow to these markets, from the most recognizable produce like sweet corn, tomatoes and cucumbers to fenugreek, Brussels sprouts, and kohlrabi.



It is the height of summer and, naturally, the Jersey Fresh season. Pretty much every major fruit and vegetable is being harvested around the state right now. You can find them in local supermarkets, roadside stands and at one of our 149 community farmers markets.

You can find farmers markets in the heart of downtowns, on the edge of towns, and in suburban and rural areas. They are supplied by many different types of farmers, selling fruits and vegetables, meats, cheeses and seafood. A variety of vendors sell baked goods, frozen foods, jams, jellies and many other specialty items.

There is always some unique activity taking place at farmers markets. Some have games for the kids; others have live music; and some have seating for people to sit and drink an iced tea or coffee, snack on a home-made baked good or bite into a juicy peach picked just that morning. We have seen cooking demonstrations and gardening lessons.

Farmers bring what they grow to these markets, from the most recognizable produce like sweet corn, tomatoes and cucumbers to brussels sprouts, and kohlrabi. Farmers markets provide access to this Jersey Fresh produce, many times, in places where there are no farms nearby. When local farmers supply these markets, they usually harvest the produce just hours before they arrive. Consumers know where their produce is coming from and the produce has incredible flavor because it is picked at the height of ripeness.

Farmers markets provide an important service to qualifying senior citizens and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) recipients. The Farmers Market Nutrition Program, which assists those in need in accessing local produce, is administered by the New Jersey Department of Health. Recipients receive \$20 worth of vouchers to buy fresh produce at farmers markets through November 30. Qualifying seniors should contact their county's Office on Aging to find out how to obtain the vouchers. WIC recipients can get the coupons from their local WIC office.

More and more farmers accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to pay for purchases. Check with your local farmers market or on the Jersey Fresh website farmers market listings (www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov) to see if the market has a participating farmer.

Farmers Market Week is celebrated in New Jersey the week of August 3 – 9 to call attention to these very special markets and the services they provide to their communities. We encourage everyone to visit a local farmers market throughout the rest of the summer and fall.



Complete Streets Expanding Across New Jersey

“Complete Streets,” a program that encourages local and county governments to enact safety ordinances that provide safe foot, bicycle, or public transportation options to residents is ramping up across New Jersey. The program allows for convenient travel for residents including: Children, families, older adults and people with disabilities. The initiative has also been shown to reduce traffic, injuries and pollution in communities in which it is enacted.

According to the State Department of Transportation, 103 communities and seven counties have adopted Complete Street polices as of June 30, 2014, making New Jersey a national leader.

The Department of Health has incorporated Complete Streets into the Community Health and Wellness unit’s *ShapingNJ*, the state partnership for nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention. It is part of 10 evidence based strategies to improve health – including opportunities for safe and convenient daily physical activities in all neighborhoods.

Using federal funds, the Department’s Office of Local Public Health partnered with the Voorhees Transportation Center of Rutgers (VCT) to conduct additional outreach on the benefits of Complete Streets to local health officials in New Jersey. The additional funding allowed the VTC to promote the program to all 21 counties in New Jersey. The ultimate goal is to have each county in New Jersey incorporate Complete Streets in their County Health Improvement Plans.

For more on Complete Streets, visit:
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>



Choose Your Cover Campaign Wages Battle Against Skin Cancer in New Jersey

Throughout the summer, the New Jersey Department of Health once again took *Choose Your Cover*, its skin cancer prevention and screening program, to parks and beaches across the state and along the Jersey Shore to remind all residents that sun smart precautions and early cancer detection save lives.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. The American Cancer Society estimates that 76,100 cases of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, will be diagnosed nationwide in 2014. An estimated 2,590 of those diagnoses will be in New Jersey.

Between late April and mid-August, the New Jersey Regional Chronic Disease Coalitions, with grants from the Department’s Office of Cancer Control and Prevention, held more than 30 events to provide free skin cancer screenings, complimentary sunscreen and vital skin safety information directly to the at-risk population of people who spend extended time in the sun. In one four-hour period on July 19, 660 people were screened at six beach locations in Monmouth and Ocean counties.

More than 9,600 people have been screened since 2008. Of those screened, more than 2,300 people were referred for further evaluation to their healthcare providers or to a healthcare provider identified for them.

Sun smart precautions include using sunscreen with a SPF factor of at least 30, protective clothing, a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses. To learn more about *Choose Your Cover*, visit <http://www.state.nj.us/health/ccp> or <http://www.chooseyourcover.org/>.





Douglas Fisher, Secretary of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture; James Gonzalez, President & CEO of University Hospital Network and Gloria Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner, DOH at University Hospital's Auxiliary Farmers Market in Newark on July 29.

Community Outreach & Events

July/August 2014

- July 28** Commissioner O'Dowd visited the Mercer WIC program kicking off a week of celebrations recognizing WICs 40th Anniversary.
- July 29** Gloria Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner, visited University Hospital's Auxiliary Farmers Market and the Greater Newark Conservancy's Youth Leadership Program Farmer's Market as part WICs 40th Anniversary celebration.
- August 1** Dr. Arturo Brito, Deputy Commissioner, spoke at a WIC Program breastfeeding class at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson as part of WIC's 40th Anniversary celebration.
- August 12** Commissioner O'Dowd visited the Henry J. Austin Health Center as part of National Health Center Week.
- August 13** Commissioner O'Dowd participated in a panel discussion with health officers at the ASTHO and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's, "Culture of Health Summit."
- August 14** Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, and Gloria Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner, attended a ribbon cutting at Newark Community Health Center as part of National Health Center Week.



NJ Cancer Prevention Summit
 Sept 18, 2014: Pines Manor, Edison
 To Register, please visit:
<http://goo.gl/O4AJVO>



Dr. Arturo Brito spoke at a WIC Program breastfeeding class at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson on July 30.

Department of Health

Staff Notes



- Nancy Kelly-Goodstein**, Acting Director, Emergency Medical Services, attended the Atlantic EMS Council Annual Meeting that focused on preparedness, cross state coordination between EMS providers, and certification issues relating to testing of Emergency Medical Technicians.
- Phoenix Smith**, research scientist and **Michael Kozlosky**, Administrative Analyst, with the Department's Division of HIV, STD, & TB Services, attended the 2014 National AIDS Drug Distribution Program (ADDP) Assistance Meeting that provides technical assistance and other educational opportunities for ADDP coordinators and AIDS directors from across the country.
- Linda Anderson**, Coordinator, Family Health Services attended the State Primary Care Office Annual Meeting, to discuss strategies that will help recruit and retain physicians in New Jersey.
- Colette Lamothe-Galette**, Executive Assistant, Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, attended Public Health Accreditation Board training as part of the Department's on-going efforts to obtain accreditation. Colette is the Department's Accreditation Coordinator.



Video: West Nile Virus Public Service Announcement.

Protect Yourself from Mosquito-Borne Illness This Summer

New Jersey is in the height of the West Nile Virus season, and the Department is encouraging everyone-especially those traveling to the Caribbean-to take precautions to prevent mosquito-borne illness by wearing insect repellent and removing standing water from yards.

"Human cases of West Nile Virus typically appear from August through October, and residents should be careful to protect themselves," said Deputy Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito. "Residents should take preventive measures like using repellent, wearing long sleeves, long-pants, covering doors and windows with screens and removing standing water on their property that breeds mosquitoes."

The Department's second annual West Nile Virus (WNV) Public Information Campaign began in July with radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) - in English and Spanish - with tips on how residents can protect themselves from mosquito bites. The campaign also includes NJ Transit train and bus ads, digital ads and website advertising.

As of August 15, there has been one 1 WNV positive case in a Gloucester County resident. Mosquito pools from all 21 counties have been tested for WNV. 223 WNV positive mosquito pools have been identified from the following 17 counties: Atlantic (10), Bergen (45), Burlington (7), Camden (17), Essex (3), Gloucester (10), Hudson (21), Hunterdon (4), Mercer (20), Middlesex (34), Monmouth (1), Morris (2), Ocean (5), Passaic (9), Somerset (4), Union (29) and Warren (2).

Symptoms of WNV may include fever, muscle weakness, vomiting and dizziness. A total of 12 residents tested positive for WNV last summer. There is currently no vaccine or medication to prevent WNV in humans.

A total of 51 state residents, after traveling to the Caribbean, have tested positive for another mosquito-borne virus, chikungunya. The chikungunya virus is not contagious from person to person, is typically not life threatening and will likely resolve on its own. If a person tests positive for chikungunya and is then bitten by a mosquito, that mosquito may later spread the infection by biting another person. More than 580 travel-related cases have been reported nationwide this year. The Department recently began testing mosquito pools for chikungunya.

The **first two chikungunya cases** acquired in the United States were reported in Florida in July. Infection with chikungunya virus is rarely fatal, but the joint pain can often be severe and debilitating. Other symptoms include high fever, headache, muscle pain, back pain and rash.

Symptoms appear on average three to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Most patients feel better after a few days or weeks, however, some people may develop long-term effects. Complications are more common in infants younger than a year old; those older than 65; and people with chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

Read more at: <http://www.nj.gov/health/news/2014/approved/20140724a.html>



A West Nile Virus poster on an NJ Transit train. The poster is part of the Department's second annual WNV public information campaign.



The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito can carry the West Nile Virus.



Department staff members Daniel Lefkowitz, Marija Borjan, and Margaret Lumia presented a poster on residential construction safety at the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologist's Annual Conference in June.

Over 14% of New Jersey's children have a history of asthma, and there are about 20,000 asthma-related emergency department visits among children each year in New Jersey.



Preventing Falls in the Construction Industry

Serious injuries as a result of work-related falls occur in alarming numbers in the construction industry. In 2011, there were a total of 21 fatalities in the construction industry in New Jersey, of which six were due to falls, slips, or trips, and an estimated 270 nonfatal construction injuries occurred due to falls during the same year.

Under a cooperative agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Department of Health conducts occupational health surveillance on work-related fatal injuries. As part of the Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) project, <http://www.nj.gov/health/surv/face/index.shtml>, Department staff conducted three focus groups with local labor organizations to determine barriers to the use of fall protection in small (<10 employees) residential construction companies in New Jersey.

Analysis of the data revealed several important barriers to the use of fall protection equipment, including lack of proper equipment, employee/employer relationships, and inadequate training. FACE project staff are working with NIOSH to use data from the focus groups to inform NIOSH's campaign to prevent falls in the construction industry. Staff are also working on outreach materials and ways to collaborate with local organizations and universities to train workers on fall safety, specifically in small residential construction companies.

A poster based on this study entitled, "Assessing Barriers to the Use of Fall Protection in Small Residential Construction Companies" was presented at the annual conference of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists in June 2014, and was nominated as an Outstanding Poster Award Finalist (see photo).

Department Study Links Air Pollutant & Pollen Levels with Increased Emergency Department Visits for Asthma among Children

Scientists in the Department's Environmental and Occupational Health Surveillance Program and the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital have published research findings linking exposure to ozone and several types of pollen in outdoor air to increases in emergency department visits for asthma in children. The study, published in the journal *Environmental Research*, examined emergency department records during the warm season (April through September) over a four-year period 2004-2007.

Increased levels of ozone, tree pollen, and weed pollen were each related to increases in pediatric asthma visits. Particulate matter and grass pollen levels did not appear to increase asthma visits.

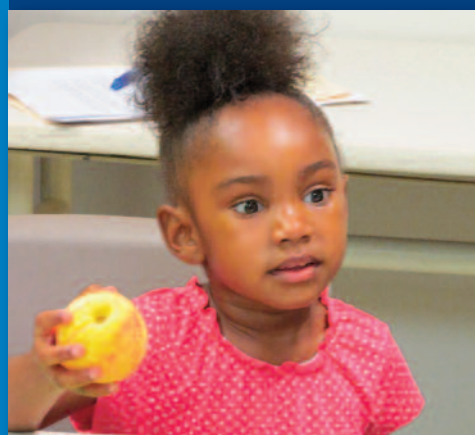
More than 14% of New Jersey's children have a history of asthma, and there are about 20,000 asthma-related emergency department visits among children each year in New Jersey. The findings add to our understanding of the complex set of risk factors that lead to attacks of this illness.

New Jersey's Asthma Awareness and Education Program develops asthma treatment plans that includes disease tracking, intervention, and occupational components. The program works with the American Lung Association and the Pediatric/Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey to act as a statewide clearinghouse of resources for asthma self-management programs and services. More on the program is available at: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/asthma/index.shtml>

*The journal article's citation is:
Gleason, Jessie A.; Bielory, Leonard; and Fagliano, Jerald A.: Associations between ozone, PM2.5, and four pollen types on emergency department pediatric asthma events during the warm season in New Jersey: A case-crossover study. Environmental Research 2014;132:421-429.*



Commissioner O'Dowd helps celebrate WIC's 40th Anniversary by visiting the Mercer County WIC Program in Trenton on July 28.



Jahzara Randolph, 3, of Trenton, samples a nectarine during a children's nutrition class at the Mercer County WIC Program in Trenton on July 28.



Commissioner's Message, *continued from page 1*

Last month, we hosted a series of events at WIC clinics, farmers' markets and hospitals to try to increase enrollment. We've also developed a [video](#), and NJ Transit train and bus advertising.

As part of our awareness efforts, I visited the Mercer County WIC Program in Trenton with USDA Food and Nutrition Service Regional Administrator Patricia Dombroski on July 28. Agriculture Secretary Douglas Fisher and Assistant Commissioner Rodriguez visited the University Hospital Auxiliary's Farmers' Market in Newark on July 29th to promote the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. WIC participants receive food vouchers worth \$20 that they can redeem at farmers' markets from June through November.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito attended a breastfeeding class, which was taught in Spanish, at St. Joseph's WIC Clinic in Paterson on August 1. Dr. Brito highlighted the health benefits of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, as well as the special bonding that occurs between mother and child.

The Department's leadership in driving measurable health improvements related to breastfeeding were validated this summer when the CDC released its [2014 Breastfeeding Report Card](#) that showed significant improvement in New Jersey's breastfeeding rates in all five categories since last year's report.

The results of the report card indicated that:

- Breastfeeding at 6 months: ↑ 18.6% (47.4% to 56.2%)
- Breastfeeding at 12 months: ↑ 14.4% (27% to 30.9%)
- Exclusive Breastfeeding at 3 months: ↑ 15.8% (34.2% to 39.6%)
- Exclusive Breastfeeding at 6 months: ↑ 71.5% (13% to 22.3%)
- Ever Breastfed: ↑ 5.9% (77.1% to 81.6%)

The Department has focused on improving breastfeeding rates with [several initiatives](#), partnering with hospitals, health care providers and community based organizations.

New Jersey has adopted changes to hospital rules to ensure support to breastfeeding mothers. Hospitals play a critical role in helping new mothers to begin breastfeeding. Four New Jersey hospitals have achieved the "Baby Friendly Hospital" designation of the World Health Organization and UNICEF and 22 hospitals are working toward that goal. Our increased rates demonstrate our collective success and will hopefully lead to decreases in our childhood obesity rates in the future.

All of these events highlight the state's commitment to the health and wellness of the residents of our state. For more information about WIC please visit www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/wic/wic_camp.shtml.



Opioid Painkiller Prescribing Varies Widely Among States

In July, the CDC released a Vital Signs report that takes an in-depth look at opioid use across the United States. Many states have seen a tremendous increase in the number of people overdosing on opioid painkillers and New Jersey is no exception.

In fact, according to the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, in the last three years New Jersey's drug-related death toll has risen steadily from 843 deaths in 2010, to 1,026 deaths in 2011, and to 1,294 deaths in 2012. Approximately two-thirds of all those deaths involved prescription drugs. In Ocean County alone, 112 people died from drug overdoses in 2012, the majority of which were linked to heroin or opiates, according to the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office.

Due to rapid increase in opiate-related deaths, Commissioner O'Dowd, on March 21, granted waiver allowing more than 28,000 certified EMTs, and police officers who are EMTs to administer Narcan, a medication used to treat drug overdose patients in emergency situations. Since the waiver went into effect, 90 lives have been potentially saved through the use of this lifesaving drug in New Jersey.

In May, the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse launched a statewide advertising and awareness campaign, "Addiction Does Not Discriminate," that is running through September. The campaign seeks to raise awareness of the dangers of opioid abuse, and how people can prevent it and receive needed help. More on the campaign is available at KnowAddiction.nj.gov.

The CDC's vital signs report notes that nationally health care providers wrote 259 million prescriptions for opioid painkillers in 2012. Alabama, wrote almost three times as many of these prescriptions per person as those in the lowest prescribing state, Hawaii. Most of the highest prescribing states were in the South. Previous research has shown that regional variation in use of prescriptions cannot be explained by the underlying health status of the population.

The Vital Signs report also contains a study highlighting the success of Florida in reversing prescription drug overdose trends. Results showed that after statewide legislative and enforcement actions in 2010 and 2011, the death rate from prescription drug overdose decreased 23% between 2010 and 2012. Florida officials had taken these actions in response to a 28 percent increase in the drug overdose death rate over the preceding years (2006-2010).

Declines in death rates in Florida for specific prescription painkillers (oxycodone, methadone, and hydrocodone) and sedatives paralleled declines in prescribing rates for those drugs. This report was based on Florida Medical Examiners Commission data from 2006 to 2012 and IMS Health National Prescription Audit data from 2008 to 2012.

Read more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0701-opioid-painkiller.html>



CDC Video: Opioid Painkiller Prescribing: Where You Live Makes a Difference.

New Jersey's drug-related death toll has risen steadily from 843 deaths in 2010, to 1,026 deaths in 2011, and to 1,294 deaths in 2012.





PREP RALLY CHILD GUIDE

Emergency Preparedness Activities for Children



WE'VE BEEN
RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES
FOR **OVER 90 YEARS**

Save the Children USA: Helping Children in Emergencies



Save the Children Community Preparedness

Commissioner O'Dowd and Division of Children and Families Commissioner Blake joined with local health officers and county human services directors in New Brunswick on August 1 to see a demonstration of a new self-assessment tool on community preparedness.

The Community Preparedness Index, presented by "Save the Children," is a self-assessment tool that helps cities, counties and communities gauge how prepared they are to meet the needs of children in disasters. It can help provide a scan of their child-focused preparedness activities along with areas for improvement.

"These are valuable resources for New Jersey communities and counties, especially as many are still recovering from Sandy," said Commissioner O'Dowd.

The Community Preparedness index is an online assessment tool. It surveys local domains such as child care, public schools, hospitals, sheltering, regulatory/supervisory agencies and other community-wide issues that pertain to child-focused preparedness. The assessment tool is voluntary.

Each community that uses the index can complete it in the way that is best for them. Some may complete it in one sitting; other communities may assign subject matter experts specific portions to complete.

Save the Children is a non-profit organization that is engaging communities with a focus on preparing children for emergencies. They provide resources to children with special medical and developmental needs.



"These are valuable resources for New Jersey communities and counties, especially as many are still recovering from Sandy," said Commissioner O'Dowd.

For more information, visit www.savethechildren.org/GetReady

2013-2014 Flu Season – Year in Review

New Jersey Vaccines for Children Program shipped 327,380 doses of inactivated flu vaccine and 86,620 doses of live attenuated flu vaccines to communities across New Jersey during the 2013-2014 flu season with a total value \$5.6 million. The Department thanks everyone in New Jersey's medical community for working to vaccinate patients against the flu.

Read more at:

https://njiis.nj.gov/docs/VFC_Newsletter_July_2014V1_I2.pdf

'Cancer Matters'
Brought To You By:

RUTGERS
Cancer Institute
of New Jersey

Benefits of Being the 'Garden State'

By Kristin Waldron, RD, CSO

Even though summer is winding down, an abundance of fresh, juicy fruits and vegetables are available. Our own Garden State is known for growing a wide variety of fresh produce that is available throughout the season such as blueberries, tomatoes, cherries, peaches, spinach, and bell peppers, just to name a few.

Along with being delicious, fruits and vegetables can play a key role in good health because they are nutrient-rich and low in calories. According to the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR), the nutrient combinations of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals found in fruits and vegetables can help aid in cancer prevention. Making fresh produce the main focus of each summer meal can help reduce and maintain a healthy body weight – an AICR guideline that can also decrease the risk of cancer. Many fruits and vegetables are also good sources of dietary fiber. A diet that includes foods high in fiber has been shown to help lower the risk for colorectal cancer.

A number of fruits and vegetables contain phytochemicals. These phytochemicals have antioxidant and anticancer properties. Blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries are rich sources of ellagic acid. Research has shown that this phytochemical can help prevent against cancers of the bladder, breast, esophagus, lung, and skin. Watermelon, red bell peppers, and tomatoes contain a powerful antioxidant called lycopene. Many studies have found that lycopene helps protect against prostate cancer. Cherries contain anthocyanin, which has demonstrated the ability to destroy the growth of cancer cells without affecting healthy cells. Spinach and kale contain carotenoids, such as lutein and zeaxanthin, which help prevent cancers of the mouth, pharynx, and larynx.

Polyphenol compounds that are found in peaches and plums are currently being studied for their ability to destroy breast cancer cells. There are an abundant amount of different phytochemicals that are naturally occurring in fruits and vegetables that provide us with various health benefits.

Support your community by browsing the selection of fresh produce at your local farmer's market. Many even remain open into the fall. While you're closing out this summer with amazing dishes featuring New Jersey's freshest produce, remember that you will also be aiding your body in cancer prevention!



Kristin Waldron, RD, CSO, is a registered dietitian at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

