



Bucksport Regional
Health Center



December 2024

BRHC Health Beat



Message from the CEO *Carol Carew, RN, BSN, MBA*

Happy Holidays! They are upon us. It is one of the busiest times of the year. In this newsletter, I want to focus on staying healthy amid the stress. December 5-11 is National Handwashing Week. Handwashing may seem like a trivial thing but it couldn't be more important to your health. The flu, COVID, RSV, and even the common cold can be spread via contaminated hands.

Now, think about everything you will touch this month. Shopping, parties, etc. So if a person has a virus and sneezes or coughs into their hand, or even wipes away the sniffles, and then touches a doorknob, elevator button, or something in a store, the germs and virus are now on that item. If you touch it, then touch your face, you have welcomed in the virus. Washing your hands thoroughly and correctly is one of the easiest ways you can stay healthy in season.

Two other important things:

- If you need insurance for 2025, see the back of this newsletter.
- And there is still time to get your flu shot and COVID shot. Get vaccinated, wash your hands, be safe.

Have a great season.

Carol

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.

4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Handwashing FAQs

How does handwashing with soap and water remove germs and chemicals?

Soap and water, worked into a lather, trap and remove germs and chemicals from hands. Wetting your hands with clean water before applying soap helps you get a better lather than applying soap to dry hands. A good lather forms pockets called micelles that trap and remove germs, harmful chemicals, and dirt from your hands.

Lathering with soap and scrubbing your hands for 20 seconds is important to this process because these actions physically destroy germs and remove germs and chemicals from your skin. When you rinse your hands, you wash the germs and chemicals down the drain.

Is antibacterial soap better than plain soap?

Use plain soap and water to wash your hands. Studies have not found any added health benefit from using antibacterial soap, *other than for professionals in healthcare settings.*

In 2016, FDA banned over-the-counter sale of antibacterial soaps that contain certain ingredients because these soaps are no better than plain soap at preventing people from getting sick and their ingredients may not be safe for long-term, daily use. Some studies have shown that using antibacterial soap may contribute to antibiotic resistance.

Is it better to use warm or cold water?

Use your preferred water temperature, cold or warm, to wash your hands. Warm and cold water remove the same number of germs from your hands. The water helps create soap lather that removes germs from your skin when you wash your hands. Water itself does not usually kill germs. To kill germs, water would need to be hot enough to scald your hands.

For more information about the importance of clean hands and for more FAQs on handwashing visit the CDC at:

[Hand Hygiene Frequently Asked Questions | Clean Hands | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/hand/hygiene/frequently-asked-questions/clean-hands/)

BRHC, 110 Broadway, Bucksport, 469-7371

Coastal Health Center, 37 Commerce Park, Ellsworth, 667-5064

BRHC is a Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) deemed facility. Visit bphc.hrsa.gov/ftca/about for more information.
BRHC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

bucksportrhc.org

ME Marketplace Health Insurance

The open enrollment period for the marketplace health insurance runs from Nov. 1 to Dec. 15, for coverage that starts on January 1, 2025.

Mainers can enroll for marketplace insurance through the state website www.coverme.gov, where they can preview plans and prices for 2025.

They can compare costs and coverage side-by-side including:

- Plan features and benefits
- Premiums and deductibles
- Total estimated costs for services
- Plans that cover your doctors and prescriptions

You may be eligible to enroll in health insurance *outside* of Open Enrollment, or enroll with an earlier effective date, by qualifying for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) due to a qualifying event.

Common Qualifying Life Events Include:

- Lost, or will soon lose, your health coverage
- You're becoming a Maine resident
- Adding a dependent (through birth, adoption, or fostering a child)
- Getting married
- Getting divorced or legally separated

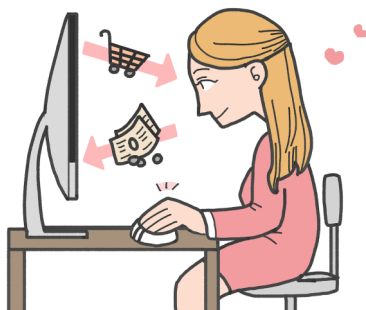
If you need help, contact us. We'll work with you to register and enroll you in a health insurance plan that meets your needs.

Be Safe When Shopping Online

www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/Holiday-Safety

Online shopping is popular and convenient but it is important that people follow these safety tips:

- Always buy from stores and online retailers you know and trust.
- To avoid counterfeits, scrutinize the product, the packaging, and the label. If the price seems too good to be true, this could be a sign that the product is counterfeit.
- Look for a certification mark from an independent testing organization and the manufacturer's label on electrical products.
- Be careful of social media vendors. Some may be scams and will only take your money but never send you a product. You might even have your bank account compromised.



FREE Veggies!

We have veggie giveaways each month thanks to Good Shepherd. Watch our Facebook page for dates and times.

We are hiring ...

Visit www.bucksportrh.org to learn more.

- School-Based Clinician, LCSW
- Dentist
- LCSW Integration & Family Services Therapist
- RN Care Coordinator
- Nurse Practitioner
- Primary Care Physician

Word Search - Happy Holiday!

Hot Chocolate
Giving
Joy
Lights
Eggnog

Shopping
Wrapping
Bows
Decorations
Baking

Holidays
Candy Canes
Snow
Singing
Cookies

g	e	b	e	o	o	l	a	o	e	s	p
c	g	s	b	a	k	i	n	g	o	b	p
s	g	n	i	p	p	a	r	w	r	o	b
s	n	o	i	l	n	o	w	h	s	n	n
g	o	i	h	p	i	o	l	o	n	c	n
o	g	t	o	o	p	g	b	r	j	o	w
e	t	a	l	o	c	o	h	c	t	o	h
i	l	r	i	s	w	i	h	t	n	k	y
n	d	o	d	s	o	y	i	s	s	i	i
d	o	c	a	n	d	y	c	a	n	e	s
n	d	e	y	g	n	i	v	i	g	s	h
p	r	d	s	i	n	g	i	n	g	o	p