



# Monmouth County Regional Health Commission

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## NJ FamilyCare

Winter 2009

NJ FamilyCare is federally and state funded health insurance for New Jersey uninsured children and certain low income parents and guardians. NJ FamilyCare is for families who do not have available or affordable employer insurance, and cannot afford to pay the high cost of private health insurance.

NJ FamilyCare is a comprehensive health insurance program that provides a wide range of services:

- Healthcare provider visits
- Eyeglasses
- Hospitalization
- Lab tests
- X-rays
- Prescriptions
- Regular checkups
- Mental health
- Dental (for most kids)

Each county has at least three and up to five Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) to choose from that will help you get these services once enrolled. Depending on your family's yearly income, there may be restrictions on certain services.

Children 18 and younger may apply for the program, as well as certain low-income parents. The income eligibility level for parent coverage has increased to 200% of the federal poverty level as of September 1, 2008. For example, a family of four with a monthly income of up to \$3,534 could be eligible for coverage.

Any applicant in a "Qualified" immigrant status is able to apply for NJ FamilyCare, regardless of the date that they entered the United States. They do not have to wait five years to be eligible.

For more information visit <http://www.njfamilycare.org/>

## Children's Dental Health

Tooth decay (dental caries) affects children in the United States more than any other chronic infectious disease. Untreated tooth decay causes pain and infections that may lead to problems areas; in eating, speaking, playing, and learning.

The good news is that tooth decay and other oral diseases that can affect children are preventable. The combination of dental sealants and fluoride has the potential to nearly eliminate tooth decay in school-age children.

### What Parents and Caregivers Can Do

Here are some things you can do to ensure good oral health for your child:

- Encourage your children to eat regular nutritious meals and avoid frequent between-meal snacking.
- Protect your child's teeth with fluoride. Use a [fluoride toothpaste](#). If your child is less than 7 years old, put only a pea-sized amount on their toothbrush.
- If your drinking water is not [fluoridated](#), talk to a dentist or physician about the best way to protect your child's teeth.
- Talk to your child's dentist about [dental sealants](#). They protect teeth from decay.
- If you are pregnant, seek early prenatal care and eat a healthy diet. The diet should include folic acid which can be found in leafy green vegetables (like spinach and turnip greens), fruits (like citrus fruits and juices), and dried beans and peas. Folic acid helps prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord and possibly cleft lip/palate.

# Protect Yourself & Your Family From Deadly Carbon Monoxide

As the weather becomes colder, extreme caution is urged when using sources of carbon monoxide such as unvented kerosene and gas space heaters, gas water heaters, wood stoves, chimneys and furnaces, fireplaces and gas stoves. Other common sources are automobile exhaust from attached or unvented garages and "patched" vent pipes using tape, gum or other substances.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless and colorless gas that can deprive the body of oxygen. The New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES) encourages everyone to install carbon monoxide (CO) detectors in their home.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are headaches, sleepiness, fatigue, confusion and irritability at low levels. At higher levels, it can result in nausea, vomiting, irregular heartbeat, impaired vision and coordination, and death. If you have any of these symptoms and feel that they may be caused by CO, you should:

1. Get fresh air immediately
2. Contact your local fire department
3. Go to an emergency room

## Life-Saving Tips

- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Chimneys should be inspected

and cleaned annually.

- **DO NOT** idle the car inside the garage.
- Use the correct fuel in kerosene heaters.
- **NEVER** use charcoal indoors or in areas with inadequate ventilation.
- Have a trained professional inspect, clean and tune-up central heating systems like the furnace every year.
- Gas appliances must have adequate ventilation so that carbon monoxide will not accumulate.

For more information visit <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/co.html>

## January is National Radon Action Month

### We're on the Web!

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

For information on current health issues, restaurant inspections, and health related news.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated January as National Radon Action Month. Radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in

America and claims the lives of about 20,000 Americans each year. In fact, the EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General urge all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes, schools, and other buildings for radon. Exposure to radon is a preventable health risk, and testing

radon levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure. High radon level is detected in your home, you can take steps to fix the problem to protect yourself and your family. For more information please visit <http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html>

## Sale of Flavored Cigarettes is Prohibited

Effective November 30, 2008, the sale or distribution of flavored cigarettes (with the exception of cigarettes flavored with tobacco, menthol, or clove) in New Jersey was prohibited.

Prohibited flavored cigarettes include those which produce smoke or impart a distinguishable flavor, taste or aroma prior to or during consumption. Some

of the flavors include, but are not limited to, any fruit, chocolate, vanilla, honey, candy, cocoa, dessert, alcoholic beverage, herb or spice. According to public health experts, the existence of these products increases the incidence of tobacco use among children. The prohibition does not apply to little cigars, small cigars, cigarillos, large cigars, pipe tobacco or smokeless tobacco.