



HAVE A HEART

The Truth About Cholesterol

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States- accounting for 40% or approximately 960,000 deaths each year. There are many risk factors that cause heart disease; some you can control, such as diet, exercise, or smoking; some you cannot, such as age, gender, and family history. In an effort to help you learn about heart disease, The Focus will be providing you with a series of articles called *Have A Heart*. This article is the first in the series and will present information on cholesterol. Please see our upcoming spring issue for our second *Have a Heart* story.

The Basics on Cholesterol & Its Impact on Your Heart

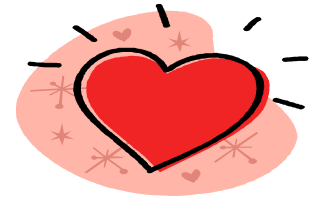
You may have or know of someone who has high cholesterol, but what is cholesterol? Why is it so harmful to your heart? What is "good" or "bad" cholesterol? What do the numbers mean? Why is it important to get your cholesterol checked?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance which is found in all cells of your body. Cholesterol is required for many bodily functions including hormone, digestive enzyme, and Vitamin D production. Some cholesterol is produced by the body, but some enters the body from the foods you eat.

Cholesterol is carried through your body in substances called lipoproteins. There are two types of lipoproteins: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL).

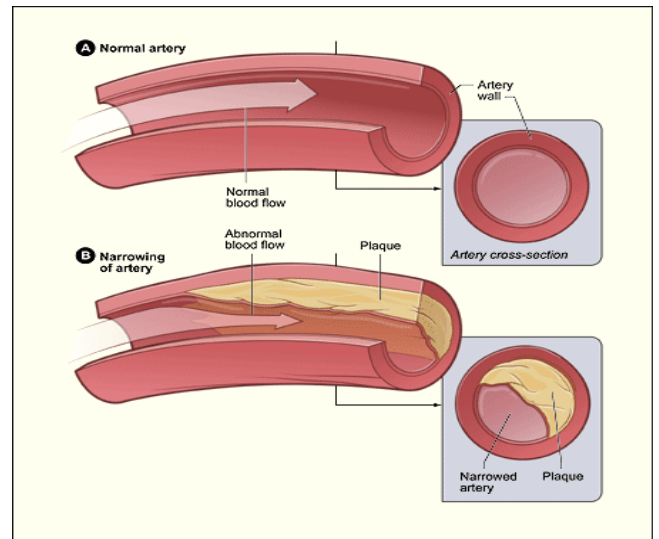
LDL is often referred to as "bad" cholesterol since high LDL cholesterol causes plaque to form inside the arteries (blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich blood throughout the

body). As this plaque forms on the lining of the arteries, the passageway for blood becomes narrower and narrower until the flow of blood in the artery is blocked. If the blockage occurs in an artery which provides blood to the heart, a heart attack will occur. Whereas, if the blockage occurs in an artery which provides blood to the brain, a stroke will occur.



If you have elevated LDL cholesterol (160 mg/dL or greater), you have an increased chance of developing heart disease.

(STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 2)



The illustration shows a normal artery with normal blood flow (Figure A) and an artery containing plaque buildup (Figure B).

Inside this issue:

Have A Heart: The Truth About Cholesterol	1 - 2
E. coli- Beware of Rare	2
Methamphetamine Drug Abuse	3
Carbon Monoxide	3-4
Radon	4-5
Littering	5
Beware of Rats	6
Health Screenings & Programs	6

Special points of interest:

- January is Radon Awareness Month
- February is American Heart Month
- March is National Nutrition Month
- March 18-24 is National Poison Prevention Week
- March 27, 2007 is American Diabetes Alert Day

HAVE A HEART

The Truth About Cholesterol (Continued from Page 1)

Your risk of heart disease is lower when your LDL cholesterol is low.

HDL is known as "good" cholesterol since it is believed to carry bad cholesterol away from the arteries to the liver where it is broken down to be passed out of the body. As a result, HDL helps keep plaque from forming. A low HDL (less than 40 mg/dL) indicates that you have an increased risk of heart disease. The greater your HDL compared to your LDL, the lower your risk of heart disease.

TIPS ON CHOLESTEROL & KEEPING HEALTHY

- Get a cholesterol test. Speak to your doctor about getting tested.
- Avoid eating foods that are high in saturated fat. Foods from animals, such as eggs, meat, poultry, and whole milk are high in cholesterol, whereas foods from plants, such as fruits, vegetables or unprocessed nuts, grains, and seeds, do not contain cholesterol.
- Regular aerobic exercise helps increase HDL, reduce high blood pressure, and reduce your risk for heart disease. Biking, jogging, and brisk walking are some simple exercises that are aerobic. As with all exercise, you should consult with your physician to determine which exercise regimen is best for you.
- If you smoke, QUIT! Smoking has been shown to decrease HDL (good cholesterol). Smoking also increases your risks for developing heart disease and other diseases such as emphysema and cancer.



E. coli Beware of Rare

E. coli are bacterium that normally lives in the intestines of mammals. However, when E. coli bacterium contaminates food sources, the bacterium can cause severe illness and even death.

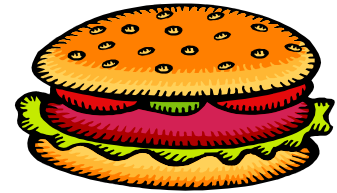
E. coli infection is the leading cause of food poisoning. Infection with E. coli can cause bloody diarrhea and possibly kidney failure. Infection with E. coli can occur in a variety of ways. Most commonly, infection occurs from eating undercooked or contaminated ground beef. However, infection can also occur from eating foods that have been contaminated by feces, drinking unpasteurized milk and juices, swimming in or drinking sewage-contaminated water, or spread via person-to-person contact within families and child care facilities.

After eating a contaminated food source, symptoms may appear within 3 to 4 days. Symptoms include bloody diarrhea and abdominal pain. Sometimes non-bloody diarrhea or no symptoms at all will occur. The illness may clear up in about 5 to 10 days.

O157:H7 is a strain of E. coli which produces a powerful toxin that can cause severe illness leading to kidney failure or death if untreated. Diagnostic tests should be performed for any sudden onset of bloody diarrhea to determine if E. coli O157:H7 is the culprit.

E. coli infection can be prevented. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) offers the following suggestions to protect yourself and your family from E coli poisoning:

- **Cook all ground beef thoroughly.**
 - Meat contaminated with E. coli may look and/or smell normal.
 - Use a thermometer to ensure that ground beef is cooked to at least 160 °F.
 - When eating out, refrain from eating ground beef that may still be pink in the middle. Order well-done burgers.
- **When preparing foods at home, avoid contaminating and cross-contaminating your foods.**
 - Wash your hands after each time you handle raw food products.
 - Keep raw food products away from cooked foods and ready-to-eat food products.



- Raw hamburger patties and ground beef should be placed on separate plates away from cooked foods.
- Wash whatever utensils (i.e. forks, knives, spoons, meat thermometers, etc) have come in contact with raw foods before using those same utensils to handle cooked foods.
- Sanitize countertops that have come in contact with raw foods by using a chlorine-based cleaner/detergent designed for food preparation surfaces.
- **Drink pasteurized milk and juices.**
- **Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating them.**
- **Avoid drinking contaminated water.**
 - Drink bottled water or municipal water that has been properly disinfected.
- **Avoid swallowing lake or pool water when swimming.**
- **Maintain good hygiene.**
 - Ensure that persons with diarrhea wash their hands properly after every visit to the restroom. This will prevent the spread of infection.



Methamphetamine Drug Abuse: A Growing Problem

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive and harmful drug that stimulates the brain and nervous system. Methamphetamine is often referred to by its street names of "speed," "meth," "chalk," "ice," "crystal," "glass," and "tina."

Methamphetamine is made in illegal laboratories and has a high potential for abuse and addiction. The drug is often injected, snorted, smoked, or ingested orally. Methamphetamine users feel a short yet intense "rush" when the drug is initially taken. The effects of methamphetamine use can be quite damaging and include addiction, psychotic behavior, and brain damage. According to the United Nations, 35 million people use methamphetamine worldwide, making it the second most frequently used illegal drug behind marijuana.

Production of Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is often made in underground laboratories using a variety of ingredients available in stores. The manufacturing of methamphetamine is called "cooking". Cooking a batch of methamphetamine is very dangerous because the chemicals used are often explosive and the by-products are very toxic. Methamphetamine labs are a danger to the "cook", the community surrounding the lab, and law enforcement personnel.

Addiction & Health Effects

Methamphetamine is so highly addictive that users may become hooked on the

drug after only trying it once. Those who use methamphetamine and attempt to stop often suffer withdrawal symptoms that include depression, anxiety, fatigue, paranoia, aggression, and intense cravings for the drug.

Methamphetamine use can cause violent or psychotic behavior, anxiety disorders, mental confusion, insomnia, auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances, delusions, and paranoia.



Users often experience twitching, "jitteriness", repetitive behavior (known as "tweaking"), and jaw clenching or teeth grinding. Methamphetamine often causes decreased production of saliva and increased thirst. Since saliva serves an important role in protecting teeth, users often experience tooth decay, especially when sugary drinks are consumed to quench thirst.

Use of methamphetamine can cause damage to the brain that is similar to damage caused by Alzheimer's disease,

stroke, and epilepsy.

Common Side Effects of Meth Use

- Addiction
- Diarrhea, nausea, weight loss
- Loss of appetite, insomnia, tremors, jaw-clenching
- Agitation, compulsive need to perform repetitive tasks
- Talkativeness, mood swings, panic attack

Side Effects of Chronic Meth Use

- Violent and psychotic behavior
- Auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances, delusions, and paranoia
- Tooth Decay
- Brain Damage

For more information on drug recovery, counseling, and education programs, please call:

The Addictions Hotline of

New Jersey

800-238-2333

www.njdrughotline.org

Protect Yourself & Your Family From Deadly Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

With the arrival of winter, you may notice increasing reports in the news media regarding carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, and toxic gas that is produced when fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. Improperly installed or malfunctioning fuel-burning appliances including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves can produce carbon monoxide. Other appliances that produce carbon monoxide include charcoal burning grills,

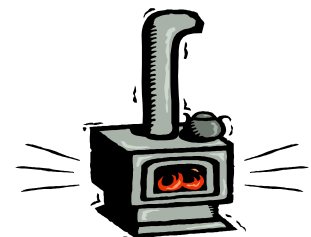
gas operated yard equipment (leaf blowers, lawn mowers, snow blowers, chain saws, etc.). Because it is impossible to see, taste, or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you are aware it is in your home.

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

At low levels of exposure, CO may result in mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses. These symptoms may include shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches. At higher levels, most people will

experience severe headaches, dizziness, mental confusion, nausea, or fainting. Loss of consciousness and death can result if CO exposure persists for a long time.

(STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 4)



Protect Yourself & Your Family From Deadly Carbon Monoxide Poisoning *(Continued from Page 3)*

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

Prevention of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Fuel-burning appliances including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves should be inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that the flues and chimneys are connected, not blocked, installed properly, and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Never idle your car in a garage even if the garage door to the outside is open. Fumes can build up very quickly in the garage and enter the living area of your home.



The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends that every home should have a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm.

- Never use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Never use a charcoal grill indoors, even in a fireplace.
- Never sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- Never use gasoline-powered engines (movers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, chain saws, small engines

or generators) in enclosed spaces.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Carbon monoxide detectors should never be used as a replacement for proper use and maintenance of fuel-burning appliances. When selecting a detector, do some research on features and do not select a detector solely on the basis of cost. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, non-governmental organizations such as Consumers Union (publisher of *Consumer Reports*), the American Gas Association, and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) can help you make an informed decision on the selection of a CO detector.

Look for UL certification on any detector you purchase. Always follow manufacturer's instructions on installation, use, and maintenance of any detector you buy.

For more information on how to reduce your risks from CO, call EPA's [Indoor Air Quality INFO Clearinghouse \(1-800-438-4318\)](#) or the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) at (1-800-638-2772).

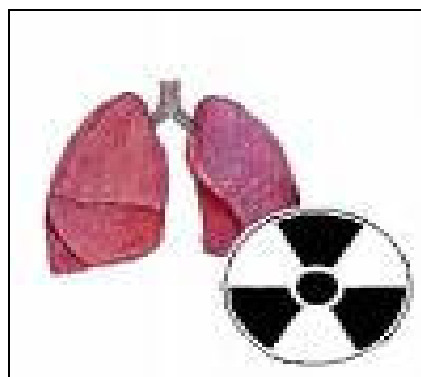
Radon Is Your Home Putting You at Risk for Lung Cancer?

Radon is a cancer-causing natural gas. The presence of this invisible, tasteless and odorless gas in your home can be hazardous to your family's health.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in America. Every year, radon claims more than 20,000 lives. Fortunately, you can take action to reduce the risks of radon gas.

Protect your family by having your home tested for radon gas. Testing for radon is important because there are no immediate symptoms to exposure. By the time symptoms associated with exposure to radon develop, it may be too late.

To test your home you can either contact a local professional home inspector who offers radon testing or you can pick



up a do-it-yourself test kit at a local hardware store. Professional testing can cost as much as \$300.00 depending on the size of the space being tested. Most do-it-yourself kits run \$20.00 to \$30.00 and are relatively easy to use. Whatever method you choose, the month of January and the following cooler months are

the best time to test your home for radon gas (given that openings to the interior of your home will likely be closed during the colder months allowing for more accurate results).

If you find that the radon gas levels in your home are high (a rating of 4 pCi/l or higher), get in touch with your State Radon Program for a list of qualified radon mitigation contractors. The contact information for the New Jersey Radon Program are as follows:

- Department of Health and Senior Services
www.state.nj.us/health
P.O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360
Toll free in NJ: 1-800-367-6543

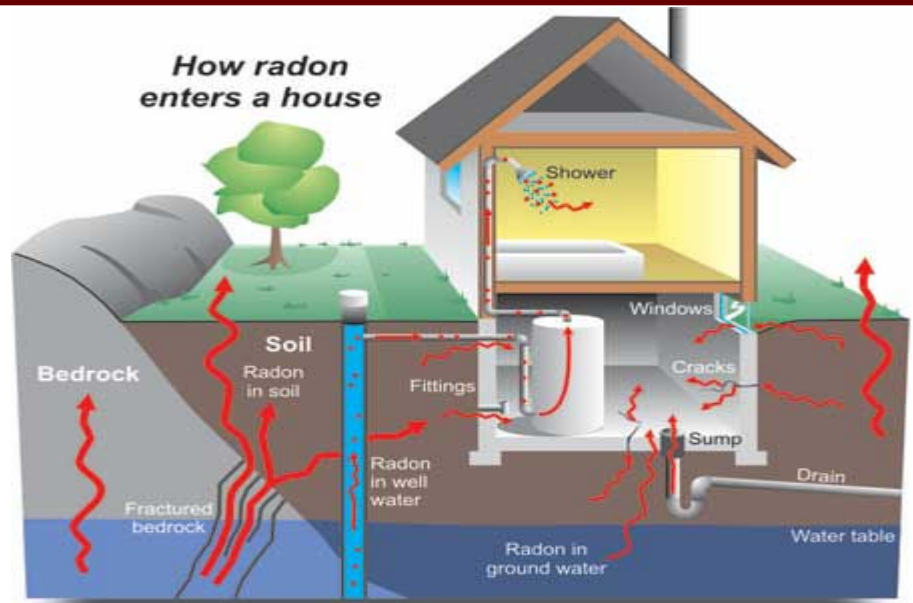
Radon

Is Your Home Putting You at Risk for Lung Cancer? (Continued from Page 3)

- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
www.state.nj.us/dep/index.html
401 E. State Street
P.O. Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402
Toll free in NJ: 1-877-927-6337

There are also do-it-yourself options available for reducing radon gas levels in your home. Your State Radon Program can provide with information on do-it-yourself options.

Protect your family. Take action against Radon today.



Don't Be a Litter Bug! Keep Passaic Clean & Healthy!

Large quantities of litter including cigarette butts, candy wrappers, food packaging, chewing gum, plastic straws, soft drink bottles (glass, plastic, and metal), bottle caps, plastic bags, and many other forms of trash are discarded on city streets every year.

Not only is litter unpleasant looking, but is extremely harmful to the public's health and the environment.

FACTS ABOUT LITTER

Here are some important facts about litter:

- Rats and insects which carry disease thrive in litter.
- Bacteria and other harmful germs are found in litter.
- Animals suffer injuries or die every year from mistaking litter for food .
- Litter on streets ends up in rivers and streams resulting in water pollution and serious damage to aquatic life.
- Litter clogs storm drains resulting in flooding.

- Litter takes a long time to naturally break-down in the environment. Some estimates on how long it takes for litter to break down are as follows:

- Plastic bottles - indefinitely
- Aluminum cans - 80 to 100 years
- Tin cans - 50 years
- Glass - indefinitely
- Plastic bags - 10 to 20 years
- Cigarette butts - up to 2 years



KEEP PASSAIC CLEAN! WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Keep a bag in your car for collection of litter.
- Use waste receptacles to deposit your litter.
- Deposit cigarette butts in ashtrays.
- Recycle cans, bottles, cardboard, and paper.
- Keep the areas in front of your home or business clean.
- When using a vehicle to haul materials, properly secure your load.
- Teach children about the harmful effects of litter and encourage others to stop littering.

Report litter strewn properties, to the Passaic Health Division by calling (973) 365-5606.

Do you know that under City Ordinance, littering can subject you to fines between \$100.00 to \$1000.00 and/or 90 days in jail?

Beware of Rats

Facts & Tips You Should Know

Did you know that:

- rats are dangerous to people's health and well being?
- rats eat and contaminate food, damage houses, buildings and other property by their gnawing and burrowing.?
- rats will feast on vegetables, meat, fish and grains, but will settle for scraps from trash bags and cans?
- rats spread infectious disease that affect people and pets?
- rats release 25 to 150 grams of fecal droppings daily, urinate constantly, carry fleas, and shed hair that contains grime?
- rats can live from 1 to 3 years and have litters of 6 to 12 young?
- rats will gnaw on a variety of materials including wood, cement, and electric cables of that electrical cables damaged by rats can result in fires?



Infestation Signs:

- droppings and urine trails wherever the rat travels, especially in corners
 - dark smears and rub marks on baseboards left by rats as they move through their territory
 - footprints and tail drag marks in dusty areas
 - gnaw marks on wooden surfaces, especially door corners
 - a distinctive musky odor
 - agitated house pets, such as dogs and cats, because they hear rodents gnawing, running and fighting
- How can you control and eliminate rats?**
- Cover all garbage cans outside your home. Place all garbage and leftovers in the cans.
 - Eliminate standing water and areas where water can accumulate. (puddles, cracks, buckets, or pails).
 - Keep the interior, exterior, and surroundings of your house clean.

Keep floors clean and free from leftovers. Cleanliness is essential to eliminating rodent infestations.

- Cut grass and dense vegetation regularly.
- Keep basements clean. Stacked lumber or wood should be elevated at least one foot from floor surfaces.
- Eliminate food overflow for domestic animals in the exterior and interior of your house.
- Eliminate holes and openings that serve as entrances into your house: for example: spaces under doors and holes in the walls,
- Repair broken windows and screens.
- Call a professional exterminator if necessary.

Rats need water, food, and shelter to live.

Eliminating at least one of these three elements will help control and eliminate rats.

Important

Health Screenings and Programs

Free Blood Pressure Screening

Dates: Monday, February 5, 2007
Monday, March 5, 2007
Time: 10:00AM - 11:00AM
Place: Passaic Senior Center
(Rear of City Hall)
330 Passaic St., Passaic, NJ

For more info call: 973-365-5605

Free Eye & Blood Pressure Screenings for People with Diabetes

Date: Thursday, March 29, 2007
Time: 9:00AM - 2:00PM
Place: Passaic City Hall
City Council Chambers-1st Fl.
330 Passaic St., Passaic, NJ

Registration Required.
For more info or to register call:
973-365-5605

Free Confidential Rapid HIV Testing

Date: Every Wednesday of the Month
Time: 9:00AM - 2:00PM
Place: Passaic Alliance
286 Passaic St., Passaic, NJ

For more info call:
973-365-5740

Free Flu Clinic for Passaic City Residents

Date: Thursday, February 8, 2006
Time: 9:00AM - 11:30AM
Place: Passaic City Hall
City Council Chambers-1st Fl.
330 Passaic St., Passaic, NJ

For more info call:
973-365-5605



Domestic Violence & Parenting Support Group

Date: Every Thursday of the Month
Time: 6:00PM - 8:00PM
Place: Passaic Senior Center
330 Passaic St., Passaic, NJ

For more info call:
Passaic Alliance 973-365-5740

Free Cancer Screenings

Women's Screening Men's Screening

- Breast
- Cervical
- Colorectal
- Prostate
- Colorectal

Provided by:
PBI Regional Medical Center
350 Boulevard, Passaic, NJ
For more info & to schedule your screening call: 973-365-4300 Ext. 6019
All screening costs are free for eligible patients without insurance.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**A QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER OF
THE CITY OF PASSAIC
DIVISION OF HEALTH**

330 Passaic Street
Passaic, NJ 07055
Tel: 973-365-5605
Fax: 973-365-2242
Email: health@cityofpassaicnj.gov

www.cityofpassaic.com

The mission of the Passaic Health Division is to deliver equitable and comprehensive superior public health services that ensure the protection, promotion, and enhancement of the health, wellness, and general welfare of the people of Passaic.

Contributing Writers:

Carlos Perez, Jr., M.P.A
Health Officer

Lyra Diao, B.S., C.H.E.S
Health Educator

Mark Mora, Student Intern

William Paterson University - Community Health

The Focus is sponsored by Mayor Samuel "Sammy" Rivera, City of Passaic, and the Passaic Division of Health

The Focus is not copyrighted. Any or all parts may be reproduced without permission. However, an acknowledgment of the source would be appreciated. The following resources were used as references in this edition: U.S Centers for Disease Control, American Heart Association, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy; National Institute on Drug Abuse; www.streetdrugs.org; www.un.org; & United States Environmental Protection Agency. Reference to any site on the Internet is provided as a service to readers and does not constitute or imply endorsement of the information on the web site by the City of Passaic Division of Health. The City of Passaic Division of Health is not responsible for the content of the pages found at these sites.

City of Passaic Division of Health Program/Services Telephone Directory

General Information & Licensing

973-365-5603

Health Officer

973-365-5603

Environmental Health Unit

973-365-5609

Public Health Nursing Unit

973-365-5681 / 973-365-5621

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Unit

973-365-5611 / 973-365-5605

Communicable Disease Control Unit & Reporting

973-365-5611

Health Education Unit

973-365-5605

Health Division Clinic

973-365-5681

Clinic Hours

68-75 3rd St., Passaic, NJ 07055

Monday 1:00PM - 3:00PM

Tuesday CLOSED

Wednesday 1:00PM - 3:00PM

Thursday CLOSED

Friday 8:30AM - 11:30AM

1:00PM - 3:00PM

Vital Statistics Office

973-365-5601 / 973-365-5602

Animal Control Unit

973-365-5669

Animal Control Emergencies After Hours/Weekends

973-365-3900 (Passaic Police)

WIC Program

973-365-5620

Other Important City of Passaic

Numbers

City Hall Main Number

973-365-5500

Passaic Police Department

973-365-3900 or 911

Passaic Fire Department

973-365-5689 or 911

Department of Human Services

973-365-5751

Department of Public Works

973-365-5654

Senior Center

973-365-5754

Passaic Alliance

973-365-5740