

Somerset County Department of Health, Our Health, Our Future

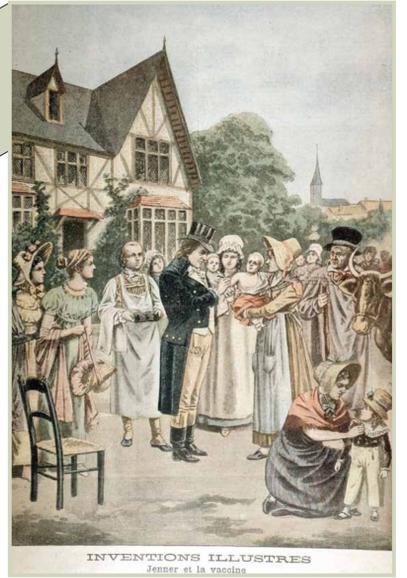
Without a doubt one can never underestimate the impact of Public Health in the world, our nation and in Somerset County. Over the past 300 years, there have been many Public health initiatives (see timeline below) which have resulted in improving our quality of life in many ways. These improvements include an increase in life expectancy, worldwide reduction in infant and child mortality, and the elimination or reduction of many communicable diseases.

Did you know that since 1900, the average life expectancy for Americans has increased by about 30 years?

The world is now a global village and diseases know no borders; with continual funding and public support for improved population-based health we will continue to make great strides in disease prevention.

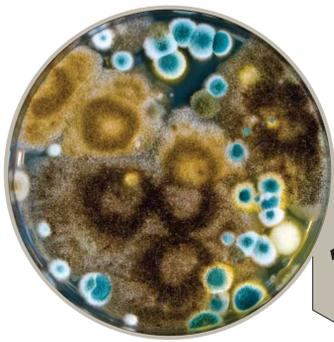
In the late 1700s, Edward Jenner, an English country doctor discovered the Smallpox vaccine - the very first vaccine.

1700



1918

An influenza pandemic (aka Spanish flu) kills 600,000 Americans and 50-100 million people worldwide making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history.



1928

Though discovered in 1928, the very first antibiotic, penicillin, is not commercially developed until the 1940s and first used extensively in World War II, saving thousands of lives. Pneumonia, syphilis, gonorrhea, diphtheria, scarlet fever and many other infections that once killed indiscriminately suddenly become treatable. It is one of the most important medical discoveries of all time. Infectious diseases plummet as major causes of death worldwide.

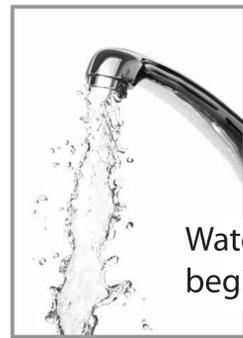
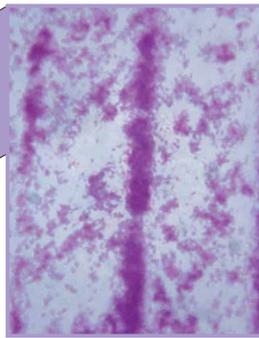


1945

First vaccine for influenza.

1946

Streptomycin becomes an effective treatment for Tuberculosis.



1948

Water fluoridation begins in the U.S.

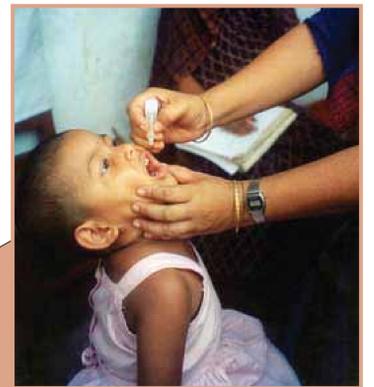


1949

Smallpox is eliminated from the U.S. (fully-eradicated worldwide in 1979). Salk polio vaccine is invented in 1955.

Sabin oral polio vaccine is invented.

1961



1974

The Safe Drinking Water Act becomes the first federal law mandating drinking water standards from big cities to campgrounds.

Lead levels in paint are regulated to reduce lead poisoning in children

1978



1992

Somerset County Department of Health was established at a County Environmental Health Act (CEHA) Agency County Inspectors are delegated certain investigative responsibilities by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

The establishment of the Public Health Preparedness and Response team evolved the function of Somerset County Department of Health into a multi-disciplined department with a countywide coordinating responsibility.

It is the lead agency for providing emergency preparedness community education and coordinating response to the entire Somerset County region in the event of broad scale bioterrorism and other public health threats.

2002



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