



# *Health Matters*

a monthly publication of the  
**Farmington Valley Health District**  
**December 2019**

**Serving the towns of:**

Avon  
Barkhamsted  
Canton  
Colebrook  
East Granby  
Farmington  
Granby  
Hartland  
New Hartford  
Simsbury



Connecticut winters can present a wide variety of potential hazards including brutally cold temperatures, ice, snow, and power outages. While we cannot control the weather, we can be prepared and take simple precautions to avoid injury.

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**Dress appropriately:** Wearing multiple layers when planning on spending time outdoors allows you to adjust to changing conditions. Water-repellent outer layers are recommended to keep inner clothing dry. Considerable heat is lost from the head so wearing a hat is important to retain body heat. Extremities including fingers and toes are most susceptible to frostbite so keep hands and feet covered and dry.

**Install carbon monoxide detectors:** Prior to turning on your home's heating system make sure furnaces have been serviced. Make sure any wood stoves or fireplace chimneys are clear and have been cleaned. Blocked vents or poorly functioning heating systems can create the build-up of carbon monoxide in the home. Never use heating sources that have no vents, such as charcoal or gas grills, inside the house or in the garage. Make sure generators are located far from the house to ensure exhaust is not drawn into the house. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless deadly gas which is why detectors are so important.

CDC'S ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING

# CARBON MONOXIDE



Carbon monoxide, also called CO, is a toxic gas that you cannot see or smell.

## CO CAN BE DANGEROUS IN YOUR HOME.



You may be exposed to unsafe levels of CO by:

- Using poorly maintained or improperly vented fireplaces, woodstoves, heating equipment, ovens, water heaters or other appliances;
- Using a gas stove, grill, or oven to heat the home;
- Running a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, or garage or near a window.
- Cooking with a charcoal or gas grill inside the home or other enclosures.

Although CO Poisoning can be prevented, each year, approximately **438** people in the U.S. die as a result of unintentional, non-fire related exposure to this toxic gas.

## WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS OF POISONING

Breathing CO can cause headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

If CO levels are high enough, you may become unconscious or die.



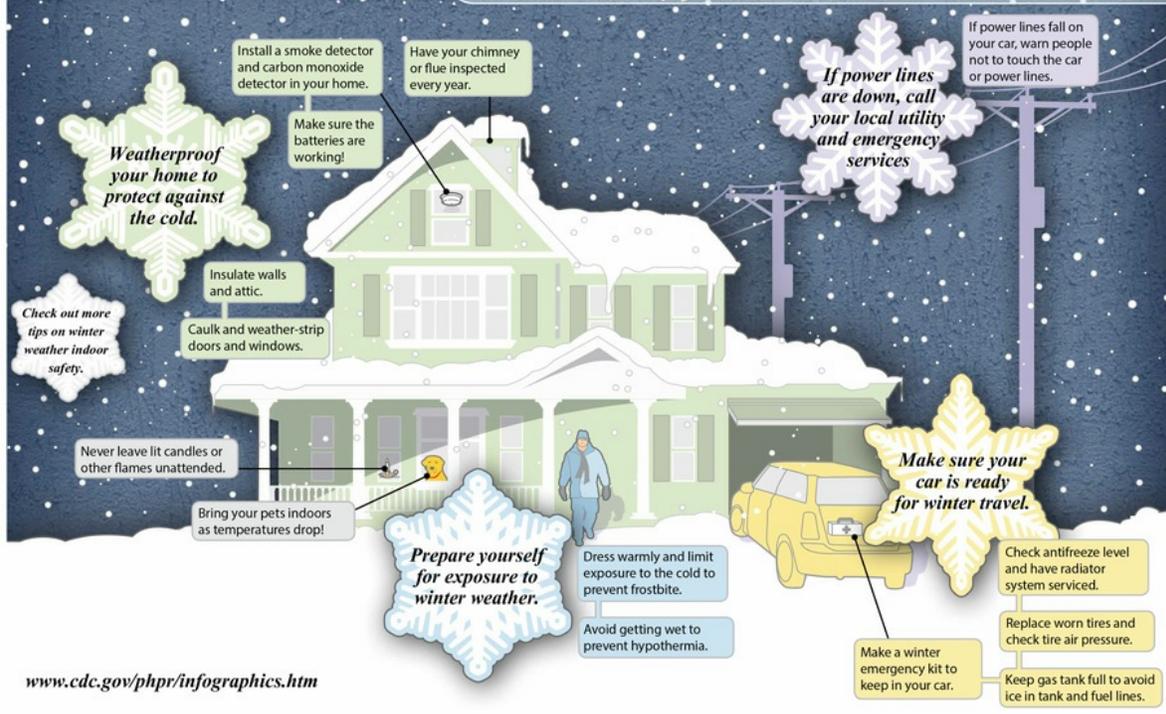
Seek medical help and get outside to fresh air if you

**Prepare an emergency supply kit and winterize your vehicle:** Jumper cables, a blanket, a small bag of sand, a shovel, a solar phone charger, water and nonperishable snacks are suggested if you get stuck during poor traveling conditions. In addition, make sure vehicles have been well maintained throughout the year. Check your tire pressure frequently and when possible keep your gas tank full to prevent gas from freezing. If snow tires are in the budget for you, you may want to consider purchasing and installing them on your vehicle.

**Make a home emergency preparedness kit:** If a power outage occurs or there are travel restrictions in place, a home emergency preparedness kit can provide you and your family with the necessary supplies to stay safe in your home. Items including bottled water, non-perishable food items, manual can openers, flashlights, batteries and solar phone chargers are recommended. In addition, a hand-crank radio can keep you apprised of the latest weather alerts and advisories.

Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) to learn more.

# Be Ready! Winter Weather



Want to Learn More About Winter Safety? Click the Video to the Right.



# Decorating Safely for the Holidays

**Prepping Your Home for the Holidays:** Decorating for the holidays is a beloved tradition in many family households. To ensure safety, read manufacturer instructions for installation and maintenance of all holiday decorations before assembly.

- Check all cords and lights prior to plugging them in and make sure they are not frayed or worn.
- If you need to hang decorations outside and you are using a ladder, safety is key. Always double check that the ladder is secure on dry steady ground to avoid falling.
- Always use candles cautiously and keep a safe distance from flammable objects, pets, and children.
- Do not use lights or any decorations intended for outside use inside the home and make sure to shut off these items when not in use or when no one is home. Many lighted decorations come with a timer that can be set so the device will automatically shut off at a time when you are normally sleeping or not home.

Along with decorating our homes many families vigorously scrub and clean their homes top to bottom to ensure it is ready for entertaining. It is important to remember that cleaning agents are chemicals and can have negative effects on health if not used properly. Check labels and use your judgement when using more than one chemical at once or when diluting concentrated chemicals. Clean in a well-ventilated area to avoid self-harm and always read the manufacture's warning label found on the product.

## Vaping Hospitalization Continuing to Rise

Respiratory illness and injury related to vaping is continuing to rise in Connecticut and all across our country. Now more than ever we must support and encourage those around us who vape to quit and consider using a cessation program if necessary. Encourage those who are currently vaping to make cessation part of a New Year resolution!

Since we are in the mist of a youth vaping epidemic the Truth Initiative a nonprofit tobacco control organization, has tailored its current e-cigarette cessation program to better fit teens and young adults. Youth and young adults can access the new e-cigarette quit program by texting **"DITCHJUUL"** to **88709**. Parents and other adults looking to help young people quit should text "QUIT" to (202) 899-7550. Click the video below to learn more about the devastating effects vaping is having on our population.

### Additional Resources:

[Connecticut QuitLine](#)  
[1 \(800\) QUIT NOW](#)

[Quitting E-Cigarettes](#)

Click the video the right to watch

the latest episode of FVHD's  
Health Matters on the topic of  
Vaping



[Click here to watch the Vaping forum with Representative John Hampton and Attorney General William Tong](#)

## **ANYONE WHO IS CURRENTLY VAPING SHOULD RECEIVE THE FLU SHOT!!**

People who are vaping are at increased risk of more serious flu consequences due to potential harm that is caused to the lungs. Having a flu shot can help reduce the risk of developing the flu or more serious complications from the flu.



## **Common Cold or Something More Serious?**

Influenza and upper respiratory infections, also known as the common cold, have similar symptoms but are caused by very different viruses. It can be difficult to tell the difference between them and they are often confused. Flu symptoms generally have more of an abrupt onset time. Cold symptoms may appear slowly over a few days. Flu symptoms tend to be more intense than most common cold symptoms and they usually last longer. Fever is a symptom associated with the flu and much less common with a cold.

# Is it a cold or flu?



Signs and Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Symptom onset	Abrupt	Gradual
Fever	Usual	Rare
Aches	Usual	Slight
Chills	Fairly common	Uncommon
Fatigue, weakness	Usual	Sometimes
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort, cough	Common	Mild to moderate
Headache	Common	Rare

The flu is more likely to result in serious complications including hospitalizations and deaths. Most common colds do not result in serious health problems for people with healthy immune systems.

However, young children and adults over the age of 60 are at a greater risk of developing complications from either an upper respiratory infection or the flu. Also, those individuals who are pregnant or undergoing certain medical treatments may have compromised immune systems and are more likely to experience these complications. That is why it is so important that everyone get a flu shot and stay home from work when they are sick to protect others.



# Feeling sick?

Stop the spread of flu in the workplace.  
**Stay home when you are sick.**

Common Flu Signs & Symptoms Include:



**Fever\* or feeling feverish/chills**

\*It is important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.



**Sore throat**



**Runny or stuffy nose**



**Cough**



**Muscle or body aches**



**Headaches**



**Fatigue (tiredness)**

*Flu is different from a common cold.  
Flu usually comes on suddenly, and in general symptoms are more intense.*

**If you think you may have flu tell your supervisor and stay home from work.**

**All employees should stay home if they are sick.** CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius) is gone. Your fever should be gone without the need to use a fever-reducing medicine.

For more information visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)



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Visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) for more information

**Learn More About Cold and Flu Season by Clicking the Video to the Right**



# Radon Kits Available at the Health Department

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas released from rock, soil and water that contains uranium. Elevated levels of radon gas can accumulate in enclosed spaces.

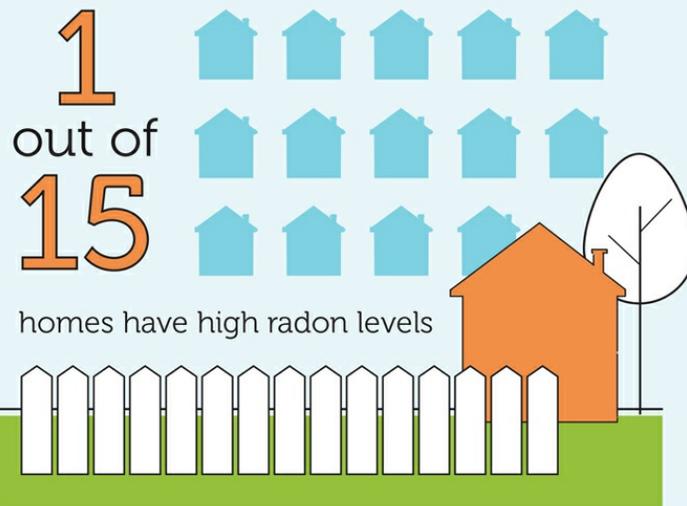
Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer second only to cigarette smoke. Testing your home for radon is easy and if elevated levels are found, they can be reduced by installing a mitigation system. For a limited time, FVHD is providing **FREE** radon test kits. They can be picked up in our office at 95 River Road in Canton 06019 CT

Testing for radon is so simple and only takes a few minutes to set up. Click the video to the right to learn more about how to test for radon in your home.



## Protect Your Family from Radon

Radon is a gas that you can't **see**, **smell**, or **taste** — but it can be dangerous. It's the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S.



Learn more by calling the National Radon Hotline:

**1-800-SOS-RADON** (1-800-767-7236)

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The health department strives to prevent disease outbreaks and conditions that give rise to poor health, promote health programs and policies that support good health, and protect members of our community from health threats.