



Health Matters

a monthly publication of the
Farmington Valley Health District
January 2020

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Setting Realistic Health Goals

Goal setting is a major component of personal-development, but as the new year comes around many of us are reminded of last year's unachieved goals. Why does it seem so hard to turn new behaviors into life-long habits? Many people have the intention to make a positive lifestyle change but find it difficult to tackle such a big task. Rather than becoming overwhelmed and eventually giving up, we suggest starting small.

Define Your "Little Wins"

Conquering small tasks eventually leads to beneficial change. For example, if you want to lose weight you usually need to instill change surrounding mindfulness, diet, and exercise. But trying to change all those things at once is overwhelming. So, what are "little wins"? Well, let's say you are trying to get an extra hour of sleep each night. You might start off going to bed 10-15 minutes earlier each night for a week. You also might try reducing screen time/electronic use before bed the next week. The idea is that each week you can create a new "little win" you wish to accomplish. At the end of a month you could be surprised at how close you are to achieving your goal!

Make it a S.M.A.R.T. Goal

Creating a S.M.A.R.T. goal means you can simplify your ideas and focus your efforts on the specific lifestyle changes you need to make to increase the likelihood of achieving what you want in life. To be successful in behavior change your goals should be the following:

- Specific (simple, sensible, significant).
- Measurable (meaningful, motivating).
- Achievable (agreed, attainable).
- Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).

•Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

Be Patient and Consider the Source

Remember that real behavior change takes time. It may take months, or even years to reach your goal. Undesirable behavior is not learned in a week, and the same goes for learning positive health behaviors. When researching how to make positive behavior change, make sure you are getting your information from a reputable site. Not sure how to tell if the information on a website is safe? Click [here](#) to read the CDC's "Deciding Whether a Source is Reliable". And lastly, always speak with your primary care physician and make them aware of your goals, and the steps you plan to take to get there.



This time of year is generally celebrated with holiday spirits meant to add festivity and joy to the occasion of seeing beloved family and old friends. Many alcoholic beverages are holiday staples, such as champagne on New Year's Eve. So, it comes as no surprise that many people indulge in alcohol consumption for holiday parties. But sometimes people can overindulge in these holiday spirits.

And sadly, parties aren't the only reason people overindulge in alcohol during the holiday season. The holidays are notorious for creating stressors including time management, money and gift buying to name a few. This is also the time of year when those who do not have places to celebrate feel sad or isolated. Even if you do have a place to celebrate, the holidays may also remind us of loved ones we are missing or are unable to celebrate with us.

Increases in alcohol consumption during the holidays can be problematic or even deadly. During this time of year there are more cars on the road and the weather can often make driving conditions more hazardous. But there are simple things we can all do to prevent injury or death related to alcohol consumption.

How Can Drinking During the Holidays be Dangerous?

Drinking anytime of year can be dangerous if you are not doing so responsibly. The winter months present problems which can make drinking even more dangerous. Drinking alcohol impairs the part of the brain that regulates body temperature. This means someone can drink enough alcohol to trick their brain into thinking their body is not cold. Many of us know that alcohol impairs judgement, but did you know alcohol impairs movement and reaction time long before someone exhibits signs of being intoxicated? Someone who has been drinking is more likely to slip on ice or be part of an accident behind the wheel.

HOW HOLIDAY TOASTS CAN TURN TRAGIC



Plan to Avoid a Drunken Debacle

- Download an application on your phone that allows you to arrange for a sober person to take you home. If you do not feel safe using a ride sharing app or a taxi service, ask a friend or family member to be your designated driver. You might be surprised at how willing your family is to help.
- Remember the only way to sober up is time. Drinking coffee or taking a walk in the cold are not effective. If you or someone you know has drunk too much alcohol, the only way to sober up is to wait. If you know you want to drink, try drinking earlier in the night and leave yourself ample time to sober up. Not sure what your blood alcohol level is (BAL)? Try this [blood alcohol level calculator](#) to learn what your approximate BAL is and how long you should wait to drive. Remember that any level of alcohol in the bloodstream will impair judgment to some degree.
- If you are hosting a gathering, offer variety of non-alcoholic drinks. For example, have sparkling water or juice, or even a hot cocoa station. Provide water for your guests as alcohol is dehydrating to the body. Providing a wide variety of healthy snacks and delicious food dishes can also slow down the absorption rate of alcohol and allow your guests to get home safely.
- Know the drinking laws in your area-especially if you're a parent
- Dress appropriately for the weather. Drinking outdoors or in cold environments can lead to hypothermia. When you drink the tiny blood vessels directly under the skin widen and fill with blood tricking the individual into thinking they are warm all over.

Knowing the facts about alcohol safety will better prepare you to drink responsibly.



Sign up for Matter of Balance: Fall Prevention Programming

The Farmington Valley Health District is proud to provide evidence-based fall prevention programming to our residents. Participants will learn how to challenge their fear of falling and how to exercise to increase their strength and flexibility. See below for more details!

Where: 321 New Britain Ave, Unionville, CT 06085

When: March 11 – April 29th
Time: 1:00-3:00 pm
What Day: Wednesday
Duration: 8 Weeks

Call us at 860-352-2333 for more information or to sign up!

Click the video to the right to learn more about the Matter of Balance Program!



New Year's Resolution: Stop Vaping, Get Vaccinated

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.

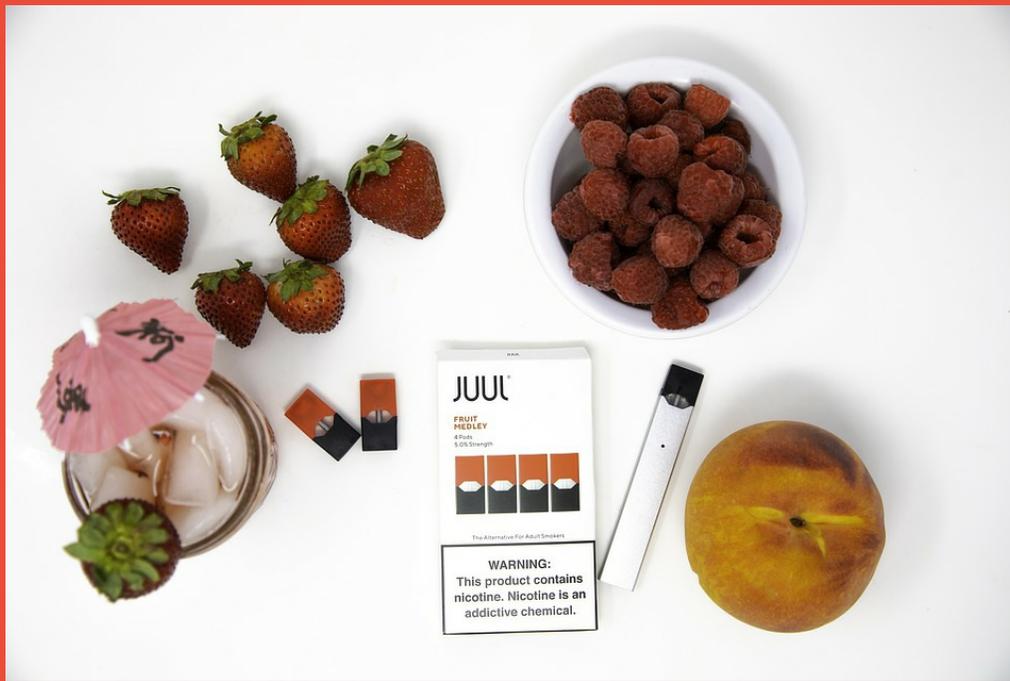


Government Bans Flavored Vaping Products

In an effort to make vaping less appealing, the Federal Food and Drug Administration has banned all flavored



additives from vaping products including mint and fruit flavors. Menthol flavoring has not yet been banned federally although some states have done away with it. The U.S. government hopes that the ban of flavored vape products will keep teens and young adults from trying vaping and being addicted to the potentially deadly habit.



Adolescent SBIRT: Adolescent Girls and Opioids

*** This training is approved for CECs by NASW-CT ***

Monday, January 27 2020

9:00 AM — 3:00 PM

*Connecticut Clearinghouse,
Plainville*

FREE Training Includes:

- *Live interactive training on Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment*
- *Curriculum supplement on the unique risks of adolescent girls for opioid misuse*
- *Online Kognito simulation with CECs*
- *Helpful resource materials and referral information*



Register NOW at www.ctclearinghouse.org/registration
Call 800.232.4424 for additional information

The Connecticut Opioid Misuse Prevention (COMP) initiative is made possible with funding from grant no. ASTWH170052-01-00 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health.



**National Winter Sports
Traumatic Brain Injury
(TBI) Awareness Month**

What is a TBI?

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a blow or jolt to the head that interferes with the normal function of the brain. The severity of the injury is determined at the time of the incident and can be classified as mild, moderate or severe.

TBI is a major cause of death and disability in the USA with a reported 30% contributing to injury related deaths in the US. In 2017, the Connecticut School Health Survey reported that 16.8% of high school students had to be treated for concussion related injury while playing school sports.

Effects of TBI can include:

- Nausea/Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Impaired Memory or thinking
- Visual Disturbances or Hearing loss
- Loss of movement or sensation in parts of the body
- Emotional changes (personality changes, depression)

Should I get my head injury checked by a doctor?

Often after a mild concussion (TBI) people feel a little dazed, but otherwise fine. Any blow to the head can leave damage or develop into something more serious if not seen and assessed by a professional. Recovery from TBI related injury is more successful if the injury is identified and treated early. People recovering from a TBI/Concussion are also more at risk of sustaining another TBI, so additional precautions need to be taken to remain safe.

How do I protect myself or my child from activity/sports related TBI injury?

Wear protective helmet when appropriate. Helmets DO NOT prevent TBI but they can reduce the severity of the damage. Make sure the helmet is the correct size and fitted correctly.

If playing formal sports, ensuring that referee/coaches implement strict rules of play to prevent injury due to unsafe practice.

Ensure playground equipment is installed properly, that small children are supervised and using equipment correctly.

Adults need to model safe practices when recreating/playing sport. Wearing helmets when biking, skating, skateboarding and skiing can reduce the severity of injury if a fall does occur.

TBI is also common in our elderly population

In Connecticut 53% of males and 66% of females over the age of 75 years have increased hospital admission for fall related TBI injury. Being aware of the increased risk of falling as we age can assist in prevention. Remember to ALWAYS report a fall to your PCP as the injury can be worse than you think!

Things you can do to reduce your risk of falling include:

Use any prescribed assistive walking devices correctly

Wear closed back non slip shoes when walking both inside and out (not flip flops)

Remove clutter from your home to reduce trip hazards

Review your medications with your doctor to ensure you understand the side effects

Try to remain physically active and consider strengthening exercises at home

Enroll in a fall prevention program like FVHD's Matter of Balance to reduce your risk of falling.

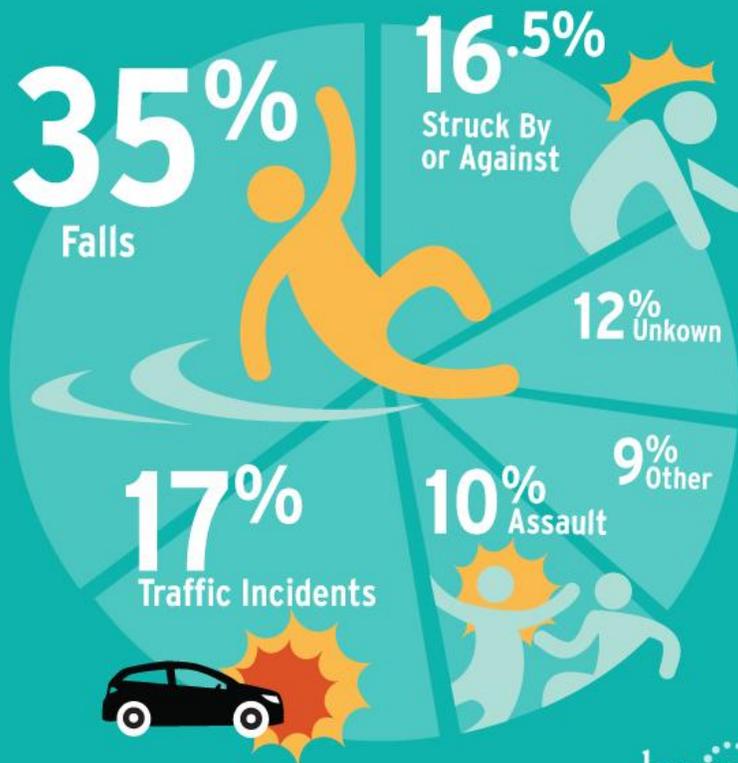
For more information:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Health-Education-Management--Surveillance/The-Office-of-Injury-Prevention/Concussion-and-Traumatic-Brain-Injury-Prevention-Program>

<http://www.biact.org/>

Leading Causes of Traumatic Brain Injury

in the United States (2002 - 2006)



Source: www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/causes.html

brainline.org

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.

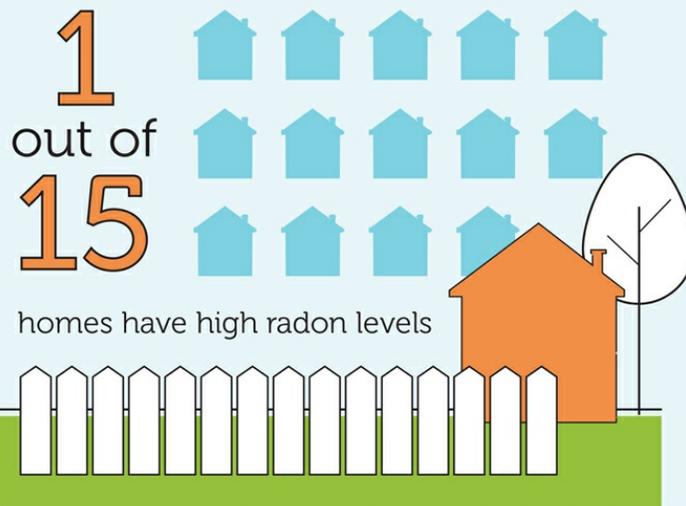
Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer second only to cigarette smoke. Testing your home for radon is easy and if elevated levels are found, they can be reduced by installing a mitigation system. For a limited time, FVHD is providing **FREE** radon test kits. They can be picked up in our office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