



Health Matters

a monthly publication of the
Farmington Valley Health District
June 2019

Serving the towns of:

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



Summer's Here and the Living is Easy.....

After a long and wet spring, summer is just around the corner and everyone is anxious to get outside, enjoy the warm weather and engage in outdoor activities. For many people, nice weather encourages more physical activity, improved eating with increased access to fresh and local produce, more socialization for improved mental health. Whether you're hiking, biking, fishing, or even hosting the annual neighborhood barbecue, accidents can happen. Taking the right steps, can help prevent summer illness and injury so your summer plans are not derailed!

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Visit our website at www.fvhd.org

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860-352-2333

Sunburns:

Applying sunscreen and reapplying sunscreen every 2 hours, especially if you are swimming or sweating excessively, can prevent painful and dangerous sunburns. These sunburns can



increase your risk of developing deadly skin cancer later in life. Limit the amount of time you spend outside between the hours 10 am and 4 pm.

This is when the sun is the strongest. Hats and light clothing with long sleeves can also help shield your face and skin from the sun.



Fractures and Sprains:

It's important that you don't rush through activities. When we move too quickly we can end up injuring ourselves. Also, refrain from drinking alcohol when engaging in outdoor recreational sports or

swimming. Even one drink can impair judgement. Therefore, boating and alcohol should never mix. Alcohol can turn any ordinary accident into a fatal accident since alcohol causes our reaction time to slow down.

Fractures and sprains can also occur when skateboarding or motorcycle riding. That is why wearing a helmet is so important. Wearing a helmet when doing activities that require one, such as biking and roller blading, can prevent serious brain and head injuries that otherwise could affect you for life

Heat Exhaustion:

Keeping in mind that the sun is strongest between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm, remember to take frequent breaks from activities if you are outside at that time. Stay hydrated, drink plenty of cool water and limit alcohol consumption. If possible complete more strenuous activities earlier in the morning or later in the evening.



Vector borne Illness (such as Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus):

Mosquitoes and ticks carry dangerous diseases. The mosquito season is likely to be very heavy given the amount of rain that we have experienced. Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus. To limit contact with mosquitoes consider avoiding outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active and use a bug repellent that contains DEET. Empty all standing water on your property as this is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The bite of ticks can transmit a number of illnesses. Deer-ticks can carry and transmit Lyme disease, the most common of tick-borne illnesses in our area. Use a repellent containing DEET, tuck clothing into socks to prevent ticks from getting on skin and always do thorough tick checks after spending time outdoors.

Food-borne Illness:

Do not leave food outside longer than 4 hours. This may mean having to take a break from the party to put food away and properly refrigerate food. Any food left out longer than 4 hours should be discarded.

Accidental Drownings:

Children should never be left unsupervised in a swimming pool, pond, or any body of water--even shallow water can present a drowning risk. Adults should be careful swimming alone especially in natural swimming areas. Natural swimming areas may have hidden hazards or vegetation

that can potentially get caught around the swimmer's feet. Never mix alcohol and swimming. Accidental drownings are more common when alcohol is involved.



We look forward to the first days of summer when we can be outside again. Take advantage of the wonderful resources we have in the Farmington Valley to be outside and active but...take the time to plan and be safe!

[Click Here to View Bike Trails](#)

image credit: AARP, NASA.gov, farmingtoncanal.org, Wikipedia

Be Wise About Your Private Well

It is that time of the year again when we focus on routine home maintenance and yard cleaning.

Have you thought about your private well??

There are approximately 322,578 private residential wells in Connecticut and a significant proportion of homes in the Farmington Valley rely on private wells for drinking and bathing water. Private well maintenance is an important responsibility of homeowners. Safe drinking water is an important part of overall health.

So, what should private well owners do to ensure the safety of their drinking water?

- It's important to know where your well is, if you don't have a well casing that is above existing grade now is the time to hire a CT Licensed Well Driller to raise the casing to a minimum of 6" above grade, but 12" is highly recommend. You will have a hard time protecting your well if you don't know where it is. FVHD has an online database where all our records are stored. This is accessible to everyone by going to www.FVHD.org and clicking on "Document Search". Try looking up your property to see if there is a file on your well.
- Keep hazardous chemicals, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and motor oil away from your well. Keep well head accessible, and do not pile snow around it.
- Periodically check your well cover or cap to ensure it is in good repair. Look for cracks, holes or signs of corrosion and have them replaced or repaired if you notice signs of deterioration.

It is important to test your water **annually** for the following parameters:

Total Coliform Bacteria Nitrate-Nitrogen
Nitrite-Nitrogen pH
Odor Chloride
Hardness Apparent Color
Sulfate Turbidity
Iron Manganese

Private wells should be tested **at least once** for the following parameters to establish a baseline.

Lead
Uranium
Arsenic
Volatile Organic Chemicals

FVHD Sanitarians are always available to discuss your water test results should you have questions.

WOMEN'S PREVENTIVE HEALTH SCREENINGS



Women experience specific health challenges related to their reproductive system and hormonal changes. It is important for women to be proactive in their health care and to develop good relationships with their health care providers that allow for open and honest discussion about their health needs.

Screening tests are designed to help detect active disease before symptoms are obvious. Most are designed to detect disease *early*, which allows for prompt and less invasive treatments than would be the case if a disease were more advanced.

It can be confusing to know what screening tests are needed, how often they should be done and when they can be discontinued. A good source of the most current research is [the United States Preventative Services](#)

Task Force which is an independent panel of experts, that help to define the high quality of health care we should have.

It is important to consider the benefits and risks of screening tests and procedures which can change as you age. Please talk to your doctor about your family history and concerns as they can tailor the recommendations based on your needs, personal or family history, and age.

Specific screening tests that women need to have:

Test	Frequency	Risk Factors	Preventative Factors
Pap Smears Cervical Cancer	A Pap test is recommended every three years for women 21-65 who have a cervix. At age 30 a pap test and HPV test every 5 years is an option. If you are 65 or older, ask your doctor or nurse if you need to keep having Pap tests.	HPV virus Weakened immune system Smoking Many sexual partners	HPV vaccine Limit sexual partners Get screened Use a condom Do not smoke
Mammogram Breast Cancer	Mammography is recommended every two years for women ages 50-74. If you are 75 or older, ask your doctor or nurse if you need to continue having mammograms.	Overweight/obese after menopause Sedentary lifestyle Alcohol No childbirth or gave birth at or over age 30 Not breastfeeding Oral contraceptives may increase the risk Dense breast tissue Started menstruation younger than 12 Went through menopause after age 55	Limit alcohol intake Maintain a healthy weight Exercise regularly Breast feed Don't smoke
Sexually transmitted infections (Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis)	Get tested for chlamydia yearly through age 24 if you are sexually active or pregnant. After age 25, get tested for chlamydia and other sexually transmitted diseases if you are at increased risk for getting a sexually transmitted infection.	Practicing unsafe sex Multiple sexual partners	Using Condoms Regular STD testing HPV vaccine
Bone density	Get this test at least once at age 65 or after. Talk to your doctor or nurse about getting tested if you're younger than 65 and about repeat testing.	Age Family History Eating Disorder Smoking Excessive Alcohol Long time steroid use	Regular weight bearing exercise Adequate Calcium Vitamin D Avoid smoking Avoid heavy drinking
Blood pressure	Have your blood pressured at least every once every two years if it is in the healthy range (under 120/80) or once a year if it is above normal (between 120/80 and 139/89).	Family History Overweight High Stress Excessive Alcohol Smoking	Maintain healthy weight Good balanced diet Regular exercise Low sodium diet Stress management Avoid smoking Avoid heavy drinking
Colorectal cancer	Recommended for women ages 50-75. Talk to your doctor about which screening test, (fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy) or combination of tests, is best for you and how often you need it and if you should continue having these tests after 75.	Family history Excessive Alcohol Smoking Processed meats	Avoid smoking Avoid heavy drinking High fiber diet and fruit and vegetables
Lipid profile (total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, and triglycerides)	Starting at age 20, women at increased risk for developing heart disease should have regular cholesterol tests.	Family History Diet high in trans fat Overweight Inactivity Excessive Alcohol Smoking	Avoid smoking Avoid heavy drinking Low fat diet Regular exercise

**FVHD Program Nationally Recognized
as Model Practice**

Since 2003, The National Association of County and City Health Officials' Model Practice Awards have honored programs, resources, and tools that demonstrate how local health departments and their community partners can effectively collaborate to address local public health challenges. Each innovative project receiving the Model Practice Award was peer-reviewed and selected from a competitive group of over 100 applicants. Recognizing the growing mental health challenges expressed by school age children, the recognized link between mental health and social, emotional, physical health and educational outcomes and the opportunity for early intervention, FVHD partnered with the East Granby School system to develop year long programming called *Resilience Grows Here*.

The overarching goal of the practice is to mediate the harmful effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and childhood stressors to ultimately improve the physical, mental and social health over the lifespan by achieving the following objectives:

- Create a school community that understands, fosters, reinforces and models protective attributes of resilience among its students
- Establish a regular curriculum and dedicated programming for students focused on building their resilient skills that support good mental health
- Create broader community networks that understand the relationship between mental health and physical health and provide nurturing environments that support good mental health

A school-based program called "*Year of Resilience*" was developed that includes one session per month in each grade and with all students. During the sessions, two facilitators/instructors (the FVHD Community Health Coordinator and a consultant) focus on a resilient attribute using exercises, team building and hands on activities. Resilient attributes are aligned with the Adverse Child Experience (ACEs) work and include: the ability to calm oneself, developing self-esteem, learning to self-advocate, trust, sense of belonging, developing friendships, expressing feelings, working as a team, experiencing success, giving back to community, experiencing failure and problem solving. In addition, the resilient attribute is reinforced throughout the month with recommended age appropriate books in the library, additional tips/tools for use in the classroom, visuals in the school and parent messaging that is sent home regularly.

"We are proud to recognize local health departments who have excelled and developed innovative public health projects that are making local communities healthier and more secure," said NACCHO's Chief Executive Officer Lori Tremmel Freeman.

The FVHD-Year of Resilience program is now part of an online, searchable database of successful public health practices in areas that range from immunization and maternal and child health, to infectious diseases and emergency preparedness. The NACCHO Model Practice database allows local health departments, public health partners, and other important stakeholders to learn about the good work being done by local health departments across the country. The database also provides users an opportunity to learn from best practices and what resources are needed to implement comparable programs in other jurisdictions that produce results.

Justine Ginsberg and Jennifer Kertanis of FVHD will accept the award in July at the NACCHO Annual Meeting.



RESILIENCE GROWS HERE

Veterans & Community. Together, we thrive!

Initiative of
FVHD



**MENTAL HEALTH
FIRST AID USA®**

FOR VETERANS, SERVICEMEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES



**Saturday, May 18, 8:00 - 5:00 or
Saturday, June 29, 8:00 - 5:00**
East Granby Community Center
7 Memorial Drive, East Granby, CT

This free training is sponsored by the the Farmington Valley Health District and their veteran's initiative, Resilience Grows Here. Lunch provided. For more information, contact instructor Valerie English Cooper at venglishcooper.mhfa@gmail.com or 860-671-0674.

May 18 - Click [here](#) to register

June 29 - Click [here](#) to register

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour certificate course that teaches participants how to respond to signs of mental health and substance use problems. The training teaches skills needed to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a problem or experiencing a crisis.

Mental Health First Aid is managed by the National Council for Behavioral Health.

(www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/veterans-military/)

Too often, people seek help only when they are in crisis, but we know that for any health problem, early intervention supports early recovery.



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.

