



Health Matters

a monthly publication of the
Farmington Valley Health District
September 2019

Serving the towns of:
Avon
Barkhamsted
Canton
Colebrook
East Granby
Farmington
Granby
Hartland
New Hartford
Simsbury

September is National Preparedness Month. **Are you Ready?**

As Hurricane Dorian leaves its path of destruction and devastation, we are all reminded that emergencies of all types and sizes can and do occur. No community or family is immune.

Are you prepared?

If you had to evacuate would you know what to bring? If you had to shelter in place and lost power, would you have food and water for an extended period?

Everyone should take simple steps to be prepared to stay safe during an emergency.

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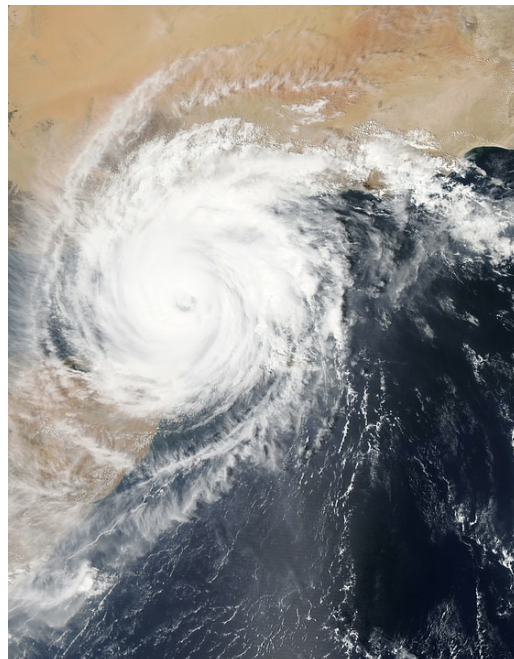


Visit our website at www.fvhd.org

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Canton, CT 06019
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Get informed.

Learn about the emergencies that could impact your neighborhood, your town and your geographic region. For example, is your residential area prone to flooding during heavy rains? Does your neighborhood experience power outages? Understanding the potential risks can help inform how best you can prepare.



Hurricane

Photo Source: pixabay.com free stock photos

Make a plan.

Once you have identified the hazards or threats your community may face, identify activities that you will need to undertake should an emergency occur.

Have important documents (birth certificate, social security card, home title or deed, medical information, important contacts, etc.) copied and stored in a fire proof safe. If you need to leave your home for an extended period, you may need these documents.

If you take daily medication, you will need to ensure that you have enough to last for a minimum of three days. If possible, try to arrange for seven days. Write down all doctors and pharmacy contact information and keep them with you.

Know what to do if you are told to evacuate your home or business. Where would you go? Will your family know where to meet you? Similarly, know what to do if you are told to shelter-in-place and do not leave your home or business.

Get a kit / make a kit.

Build or buy a kit with various household supplies, food, water, medical/first aid supplies. You should have enough supplies to last for a minimum of three days. Remember to include pet food and pet medications if applicable.

Here is a recommended list of items to include in a basic emergency supply kit:

- Non-perishable food & manual can opener
- Water- 1 gallon per day per person (if you have a family of 4, you will need at least 4 gallons of water per day. Increase this if you also have pets)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight & Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery
- Cash (ATMs may not be functional)

By following these three simple steps, you can feel better about taking personal action to help prepare if a disaster were to occur.

Click the video to the right to watch Health Matters "How to Protect Yourself from Emergencies"

For more detailed information about each one of these steps, or to learn more about emergency preparedness, please click on the following links:

<https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

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

<https://beprepared.com/emergency-preparedness-plan-for-your-family/>



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Investigates Outbreak of Serious Lung Disease Associated with E-Cigarette Use

As of early September more than 450 cases of lung illness associated with vaping are being investigated by CDC. 33 states including CT have been impacted and to date, five deaths have been reported. While a specific cause or agent

has not been identified, using e-cigarette products has been reported in ALL cases.

Anyone currently using any type of e-cigarette is urged to STOP immediately, For those who may be addicted to nicotine, seek medical assistance to identify evidence-based alternatives and FDA approved medications.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health announced more cases of people hospitalized with a sudden onset of severe lung disease associated with vaping. Those affected have experienced symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. Read the CT Department of Public Health Report on the Vaping Investigation [here](#).



Vaping Among Youth

"Join the conversation on youth vaping issues featuring Alyssa Bennett, MD, Adolescent Medicine Specialist with Connecticut Children's Medical Center and Jennifer Kertanis, MPH Director of Health at the Farmington Valley Health District, as we discuss what has led to the dramatic growth in vaping use among teens as well as solutions and advice for parents on how to discuss these issues with our children." - Farmington Valley Podcast Network

Click the link below

[Youth Vaping Podcast](#)



Environmental Health Professionals Day Recognized by Governor Lamont

Recognizing the very important role that environmental health professionals play in ensuring the health and safety of the public, Governor Lamont issued an official statement in recognition of their work.

At the Farmington Valley Health District we are very proud of our team and celebrate the work they do EVERYDAY to ensure the safety of food at restaurants, the quality of our ground water through safe installation of septic systems, the reduction of environmental risks including radon, lead and vector-borne illnesses, the prevention of infectious diseases in our salons and daycare facilities and the safety of our public pools and natural bathing areas.

THANK YOU TO THE TEAM!!

Living with Chronic Pain

According to the National Institutes of Health, chronic pain affects about 20% of the U.S. population. Chronic pain is described as ongoing pain lasting for more than 6 months at a time. Unlike acute pain that comes on suddenly, chronic pain usually has a slower onset. Chronic pain is often associated with illnesses that do not have a known cure. Chronic pain is frustrating and wearisome and can get in the way of daily activities and adversely impact quality of life.

Living with chronic pain is challenging as it can interfere with work, relationships, and hobbies. Chronic pain has been linked to emotional disturbances, depression, reduced physical activity, and social isolation. Chronic pain costs the U.S. millions in medical costs, disability programs, and lost productivity.

It has long been thought that pain medications, more specifically a class of drugs known as “opioids”, were the most effective treatment for chronic pain. While true in some cases, use of opioid pain medication can lead to addiction and physical dependence. That is why those who suffer with chronic pain have been turning to alternative medications and treatments offered by their physicians. Finding a physician that works with patients to create a pain management plan is important. There are also many strategies that can be employed to improve activities of daily life for those experiencing chronic pain.

Some of those strategies include:

- Meditation & Breathing Exercises
- Non-Opioid Medications (NSAIDS, acetaminophen, and antidepressants)
- Balance & Strength Building Exercises
- Mindfulness Practices
- Group or Individual Therapy
- Distraction Techniques
- Development of Healthy Sleep Patterns
- Planning and Pacing
- Weight Loss
- Physical & Occupational Therapy

The Farmington Valley Health District is proud to provide Live Well Chronic Disease Self-Management Workshop including one focused on pain management. These evidence-based programs have been shown to improve the lives of those living with chronic illness and pain. Click the link below to learn more about the Live Well Chronic Pain Self-Management. To find out if a workshop is scheduled near you visit: www.fvhd.org

Click the video to the right to watch Health Matters "Pain Management"



World Suicide Prevention Day

September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day - designated to increase awareness about the growing suicide epidemic all over the world. In the United States, overall suicide is the 10th leading cause of death--but the 3rd leading cause among populations age 10-24 and 25-44. Unfortunately suicides have increased over the past few years.

The Farmington Valley Health District encourages everyone to learn more about suicide prevention. This includes:

- Learning the early signs of suicide warning and distress signals
- Becoming trained in Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) an evidence-based suicide prevention program
- Help reduce the stigma of mental illness by talking about it and supporting those who may be experiencing mental health challenges



For more information on QPR training or suicide prevention, call the Farmington Valley Health District.

Head Lice – Itching to Find the Answer?



Source: CDC

Head lice are a parasitic insect that feeds on human blood and can be found on the scalp, eyebrows, and eyelashes. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, infestations are most common in children aged 3 to 11 years old. Family members of infected children also end up with head lice and together they account for 6-12 million cases annually. As our little ones return to school it is a good time to be on the lookout for these annoying critters.

During the fall and winter months, school aged children and those attending day care settings are most prone to spreading lice because of close proximity when storing outerwear and/or sharing of hats. Early detection is one of the best ways to prevent the spread. Parents are encouraged to do daily "inspections" of hair for nits, nymphs and/or lice and take immediate action before they are spread to family members and classmates.

1: How does my child catch them?

Head lice move by crawling: they can not hop or fly so they are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infected person or item they encountered. Sharing hats, pillows, coats, hairbrushes, or other personal items are the most common routes of cross infestation. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

2: I know Lice and Nits are different, why?

Nits - are the eggs that lice lay at the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp and they are firmly attached to the hair. They look like tiny oval shaped dots. A nit takes about 8-9 days to hatch.

Nymphs - are small newly hatched, immature louse. They mature into adults about 9-12 days after hatching

Adult Louse (Lice) – About the size of a sesame seed and a grayish tan in color, the adult louse can live up to 30 days on a person's head, laying about 6 eggs per day.

3: What are the signs of a lice infestation?

- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair.
- Itching caused by an allergic reaction to the bites of the head louse.
- Irritability and difficulty sleeping; head lice are most active in the dark.
- Sores on the head caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected with bacteria found on the person's skin.

4: How do I treat my child and family for head lice?

Treating the infected person requires using an over-the-counter medication or prescription medication. Talk with your Dr. or Pharmacist about the specific steps for using the medications. And keep in mind the following things:

- After each treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits

and lice every 2–3 days to decrease the chance of self-infestation. Continue to check for 2–3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.

- Retreatment is meant to kill any surviving hatched lice before they produce new eggs. For some drugs, retreatment is recommended routinely about a week after the first treatment (7–9 days, depending on the drug) and for others only if crawling lice are seen during this period.

Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.

Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes.

Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the person with lice may have sat or laid.



Don't Put Your Bug Spray Away Just Yet

Unfortunately as the summer months have progressed, mosquito activity and the isolation of mosquito-borne illness has increased. Currently the CT Department of Public Health has issued warnings in certain parts of the State for [Eastern equine encephalitis](#). Eastern equine encephalitis is rare but very serious in humans and can cause death in as many as 30% of those infected. While mosquitoes carrying

EEE are associated with a specific type of breeding habitat, all residents are encouraged to avoid outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active and wear bug repellent when outdoors. West Nile virus has also been isolated in mosquitoes throughout the State and can be found in mosquitoes in the Farmington Valley. Mosquitoes that carry WNV breed easily in small containers of water and residents are reminded to empty any containers that trap water to help reduce breeding sites. Visit the link [here](#) to learn more about what you can do to make your property less inviting to mosquitoes. Remember-mosquitoes continue to be active during the fall months.

Leading Cause of Injury in Older Adults: Here is How to Prevent Falls

According to the National Council on Aging, 1 in 4 older adults experience a fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of injury in those over the age of 65. Falls often result in muscle sprains, head injuries, bone fractures, and even death.

Experiencing a fall, or being fearful of falling, is one reason that the aging population restricts physical activity. As a result of restricting activity, individuals experience an increase in muscle weakness and a decrease in balance.

These factors make it more difficult for the older population to continue to do the activities they love and remain independent.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if the current rate of fall mortality in older adults stays the same, the U.S. can expect to see as many as 59,000 adults who will die from a fall yearly by 2030.

That is why the Farmington Valley Health District believes in delivering evidence-based fall prevention programming to the ten towns we serve. A Matter of Balance is an evidence-based fall prevention program that our staff proudly delivers. The goal of Matter of Balance is to reduce the fear of falling and increase the level of physical activity in the older population. To learn more about the program and the different topics covered, click the video link below.

To see if there is a program running near you visit the Farmington Valley Health District



1 in 4 older adults will fall this year.

www.cdc.gov

Keep seniors **STEADY** by screening for fall risk.

website at www.fvhd.org or check our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/info.fvhd.95>

The good news is a large portion of falls are preventable. See the list below of things you can do to reduce your risk of experiencing a fall.

Tips for Reducing Fall Risks

- Check your vision and hearing yearly since these things can deteriorate as we age
- Incorporate balance and strength-building exercises into your daily routine
- Manage medications with your pharmacist and physician, and know potential side effects (such as dizziness)
- Complete a home assessment to make sure all areas are well lit, and walkways are clear. If necessary, install grab bars along hallways or in the shower. Contact your local public health department if you would like assistance conducting a home assessment
- Be aware that many chronic health conditions can result in a loss of function and increase chances of falling
- Enroll in a Falls Prevention Workshop

When is the next workshop?

Matter of Balance Fall Prevention
Workshop
Meets for 8 weeks
1:00-3:00pm
October 2nd
Farmington Senior Center
321 New Britain Ave, Unionville, CT
06085



Watch the video above to learn more about fall prevention strategies in the Farmington Valley

Farmington Valley Health District Annual Report

Ever wonder what your health department is up to all year long? Visit the link below to view the Farmington Valley Health District Annual Report 2018-2019 on our home page:

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

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.

