



# Health Matters

a monthly publication of the  
**Farmington Valley Health District**  
August 2021

## Serving the towns of:

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

## Avoid Food Poisoning at Your Neighborhood Barbecue

The warm weather is a perfect time to head outside for a barbecue or picnic but it is also a time when extra caution is needed to keep foods safe. Food poisoning peaks in the summer months when warmer temperatures cause food-borne germs to flourish. Here are a few food safety steps to ensure a safer and more enjoyable season.

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Visit our website at [www.fvhd.org](http://www.fvhd.org)



Photo Source: Foodsafety.gov

95 River Road  
Canton, CT 06019  
860-352-2333

### Separate

When shopping, pick up meat, poultry, and seafood last, right before checkout to help ensure they are kept cool. Separate them from other food in your shopping cart and grocery bags. To guard against cross-contamination, put packages of raw meat and poultry into individual plastic bags.

### Chill

Keep meat, poultry, and seafood refrigerated until ready for use. When transporting, keep below 41°F in an insulated cooler. Refrigerated foods should never sit out for more than 2 hours.

### Clean

Always wash your hands with soap and warm running water before and after handling raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Clean all work surfaces, utensils, and the grill before and after cooking. Throw out marinades and sauces that have

touched raw meat juices, which can spread germs to cooked foods. Avoid cross-contamination by always using a fresh, clean plate and tongs for serving cooked food.

### Cooking

Use a food thermometer to ensure meat is cooked hot enough to kill harmful germs. The following foods should reach these internal temperatures:

- 145°F – whole cuts of beef, pork, lamb, fish, eggs and veal
  - 145°F – fish, eggs
  - 158°F – hamburgers and other ground beef, ground fish
  - 165°F – all poultry and pre-cooked meats, like hot dogs
  - Keep all cooked foods at least 135°F or warmer – until it's served
- 
- When smoking meats, keep temperatures inside the smoker at 225°F to 300°F

### Refrigerate

Divide leftovers into small portions and place in covered, shallow containers. Put in freezer or fridge within two hours of cooking (one hour if above 90°F outside).

Click the video below to learn more about Food Safety by FVHD Staff



## Legal Marijuana: Key Points

On June 22, 2021, Governor Ned Lamont [legalized](#) marijuana adult-use in Connecticut. While this law may be exciting news to some and worrying news to others, it does include several important regulations that all residents of Connecticut should be aware of.

Photo credit: Carlos Osorio, Chicago Sun Times



### Possession

Possession of cannabis among adults age 21 and over will be legal in Connecticut beginning July 1, 2021. Adults cannot have more than 1.5 ounces

of cannabis on their person, and no more than 5 ounces in their homes or locked in their car truck or glove box.

### **Retail sales**

Retail sales of cannabis aim to begin in Connecticut by the end of 2022. The sale, manufacture, and cultivation of cannabis (aside from home grow) requires a license from the state.

### **Safe products**

This new legislation imposes strong requirements for product safety. Products will have to be lab tested and will have strict packaging and labeling standards. Edible cannabis products are limited to 5 milligrams of THC per serving, and most other products are subject to a potency cap. Products will be in child-safe packaging, and product types that appeal to children are banned.

### **Preventing underage use**

It will be a Class A misdemeanor to sell or provide cannabis to a person under 21 years old. It will be a Class D misdemeanor for a person under the age of 21 to lie about their age or use a fake ID to buy cannabis.

### **Advertising**

All cannabis-related advertising will be banned on television, radio, internet, print, and billboards unless the advertiser has reliable evidence that more than 90% of the audience reached by the advertising is at least 21 years of age or older.

### **Tax structure**

The law enacts a tax rate structure on the retail sale of cannabis that includes a new source of revenue for municipalities. Portions of the revenue obtained from retail sales of cannabis will be directed to communities that have been most negatively impacted by the war on drugs through the creation of the Social Equity and Innovation Fund. Other portions of the revenue will be directed to support substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery services through the creation of the Prevention and Recovery Services Fund.

### **Enforcement of safe driving**

This law significantly strengthens Connecticut's impaired driving statutes by requiring police to be trained in road-side evaluations of cannabis-related impairment. Anyone found driving while impaired will be removed from the roadways.

### **Employment**

This legislation allows employers to continue to enforce drug-free workplaces, and respects the need for employers to maintain workplace safety and to remain in compliance with federal laws and contracts. As such, employers in certain industries, such as manufacturing and healthcare, are considered "exempt" from the employment provisions of this law. The law allows employers to take adverse actions against employees who are impaired at work. The law says that nonexempt employers may not prohibit the off-work use of cannabis or take adverse action against an employee or a potential employee for a positive THC test unless such employer has adopted employment policies stipulating as such.

### **State parks and beaches**

Cannabis use is prohibited in state parks, state beaches, and on state waters.

### **Erases prior convictions**

Certain cannabis-related convictions that occurred between January 1, 2000 and October 1, 2015 will be automatically erased.

## **Donate Blood!**

A donation of red cells, plasma or platelets can help save a life. There is a continuous need for blood donations due to the limited shelf life of the product, however, there is currently a Blood Emergency.



# **American Red Cross**

Please consider donating blood with the American Red Cross to reduce delays in urgently needed patient care. A transfusion may be necessary for many conditions including an accident, childbirth, surgery, cancer, or other unexpected events. It is the most precious gift that one can give to another. Please visit the [American Red Cross of Connecticut](http://www.americanredcross.org) to schedule an appointment.

## **Disposing of Prescription Drugs**



### **Remove the Risk of Unused Opioids**

The United States is experiencing a devastating opioid crisis. More than 100 Americans die every day from overdoses involving opioids, and millions are addicted.

You can help keep your family and community safe by getting rid of unused prescription opioids in your cabinets, drawers, or anywhere else you store medicine. Reduce the chance that others accidentally or intentionally take these dangerous medicines.

### **What are opioids?**

Prescription opioids are powerful, pain-reducing medicines. You can find them in pill forms, syrups, or prescription patches. Commonly prescribed opioids include hydrocodone, morphine, and oxycodone.

### **Why are unused opioids dangerous?**

Your medicines could get into the wrong hands. Half of people who misuse prescription opioids get them from a friend or family member, according to data from the [National Survey on Drug Use and Health](http://www.samhsa.gov). In younger children, accidental exposure to medicines in the home is a major source of poisoning emergencies.

### **How do I dispose of unused opioid medication?**

The best way to dispose of most types of unused or expired medicines (both prescription and over the counter) is to drop off the medicine at a drug take back site, location, or program immediately. Prescription drop-boxes can be

found at police stations throughout the Farmington Valley.

If you cannot get to a drug take-back location promptly:

1. **Mix** medicines (liquid or pills; do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unappealing substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds
2. **Place** the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag
3. **Throw** away the container in your trash at home
4. **Scratch out** all personal information on the prescription label of empty medicine bottles or medicine packaging, then trash or recycle the empty bottle or packaging.

### Where can I find more information on safe opioid disposal?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) launched the *Remove the Risk* campaign, which aims to raise awareness about the serious dangers of keeping unused prescription opioids and to provide information about safe disposal of these medicines.

Find *Remove the Risk* educational resources, including videos, fact sheets, and information, to help determine your best disposal option at [www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal](http://www.FDA.gov/DrugDisposal)

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Watch our Important PSA about the importance of disposing of unused pain medication

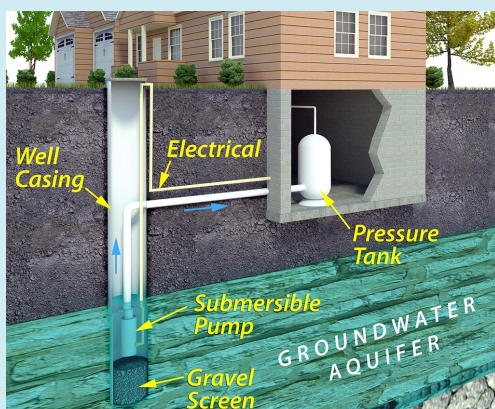
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## Buying a Home? Health & Safety Considerations

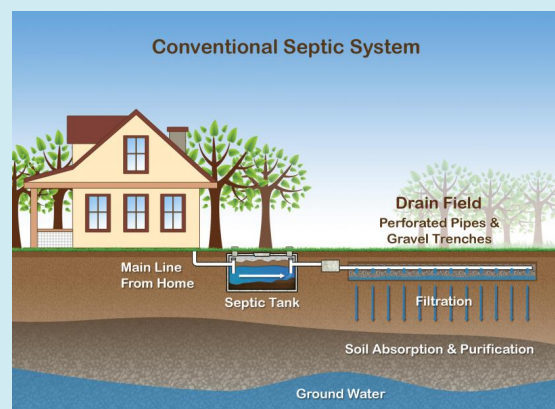
Whether you are buying your first house or relocating to one that better suits your changing lifestyle, there are hundreds of considerations to factor in when choosing your perfect home.

Living in a safe environment that is conducive to health and wellbeing is an important one. Below are just a few aspects to consider:



### Do you have a well?

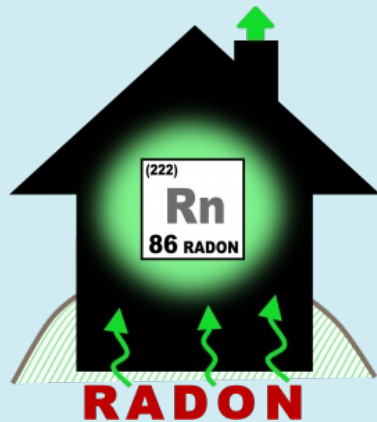
Is the new property on the well, or



### Is there a septic system?

How is wastewater disposed of on the

does the water come from the municipality? You may wish to consider quantity and quality tests for your well water if applicable. The Farmington Valley Health District has a list of parameters, as well as labs who can run the tests, drillers if you need a new well, and other lists of referrals for your water safety needs.



### How is the air quality?

Radon is a naturally-occurring colorless and odorless gas. Exposure to high levels over time is the second leading cause of lung cancer. It is easily remedied if discovered. Test kits are sometimes available through the Farmington Valley Health District. Call to check for availability.

property? Septic systems may need to be inspected. The Farmington Valley Health District has a list of certified septic inspectors and installers in your area. We can also conduct site inspections to address other considerations, such as whether the property could safely support a pool or home expansion.



### Is there lead paint?

Testing for lead paint through a home inspector should be considered for homes built before 1978 and/or will be occupied by children under 6. If lead is found, call the Farmington Valley Health District for additional information.

**Home inspectors will also consider other factors when examining a property, including looking for evidence of mold, leaks, vermin, asbestos, and other potential harms to health and safety. For more information, please see the [FVHD website](#) or call our office at 860-352-2333.**

## Mental Health Corner: An Intersection of Two Pandemics

The isolation and stress of a global pandemic have driven all of us to seek coping mechanisms. Some of us picked up new hobbies or learned new skills. For others, however, coping has manifested in less healthy ways.

Picture Source: Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics, University of Southern California



Whether your vice is bought off the street or sold in stores, lethal in small doses or encouraged as a healthy habit in moderation, we all have ways that we indulge ourselves when faced with stress. It is not the substance or activity itself that makes an addiction, but the point at which the desire to engage in it becomes a compulsion.

Drugs and alcohol are not the only culprits. You or someone you know may have an addiction to eating which results in unhealthy weight gain, or an addiction to exercise that keeps one's weight dangerously low. Addictions to social media and online shopping are being recognized as emerging phenomena. In normal amounts all these things are safe and often enjoyable, but when a person becomes reliant to them, uses them in excess and craves them to the point of not being able to focus on other things, a problem may be developing.

**These are 5 types of Behavior you might see in a person who is addicted to something:**

- 1: **Lack of Impulse Control** – not being able to fight the temptation of doing something or taking something
- 2: **Lying** – especially about how often they do something or even deny doing it at all out of guilt, shame, or social pressure
- 3: **Stealing** – taking money or valuables to continue to finance their addiction
- 4: **Manipulating** – needing to manipulate people or circumstances to allow them to continue with the behavior
- 5: **Obsessing** – thinking about the need to have what they are addicted to all the time. The thoughts can interrupt sleep, the ability to focus and work, study or be in relationships.

**Help is available**

Do these signs sound like you or someone you know? While recovery from addiction may seem out of reach – help is always available. **Telling someone you need help is the first step.** Social support is vital to manage withdrawal from dependence. Please see below for links to support services.

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Hotline](#)
- [Gamblers Anonymous](#)
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [Quit Smoking](#)
- [Online Gambling Addiction](#)

## Did You Know Your Health Department Does....?

### ...Mental Health First Aid Courses!

Mental Health First Aid is a skills-based training course that instructs participants about mental health and substance-use issues.

The Farmington Valley Health District will be hosting a course in 2 parts on the evenings of August 12th and 19th at the Avon Senior Center.

**To enroll, email Justine at [jginsberg@fvhd.org](mailto:jginsberg@fvhd.org) or call our office (860-352-2333) to speak with her.**



**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.**

