



Health Matters

a quarterly publication of the
Farmington Valley Health District
Spring 2022

Serving the towns of:

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

Get Active!

Spring is finally here! While everyone knows that staying physically active has a multitude of health benefits, finding the time to exercise can be difficult, particularly with limited daylight and cold weather, not to mention busy lives. However, January 1st isn't the only time to set goals and resolutions. With warmer weather and longer days, anyone can make the effort to work more physical activity into their routine in small ways. Some suggestions include:

- Walk outside on lunch breaks
- Join a local exercise group or make plans with friends to exercise to stay accountable
- Sign up for an exercise class
- Visit your local parks. Have you been to all the ones near you?
- Commute by bike if you can
- Check out the CT Rails to Trails system for mostly flat, often paved trails accessible to bikes and strollers

Connect with us on Facebook



Visit our website at www.fvhd.org

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SIMPLE WAYS TO BE MORE ACTIVE:

AT HOME

Walk your dog and play fetch
Work in your garden
Clean your house
Lift weights, march in place or walk around the room while watching TV



AT WORK

Walk at lunch
Exercise in your chair
Take the stairs
Stand while on the phone, reading or eating
Talk face-to-face with your coworkers



WHEN YOU'RE OUT

Go dancing
Do tai chi
Take a walk after dinner
Park far away from the door
Wear a pedometer



Image Source: [DiabetesEducator](#)

The CDC recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderately rigorous of exercise per week. That can be as little as half an hour, 5 days per week. Moderate exercise is different from everyone, but a good rule of thumb is that you should be pushing yourself hard enough that you can talk but not sing.

Even if you can't quite reach 150 minutes per week, every modest increase in physical activity can [improve your health and mood](#). Staying active has been proven to decrease everything from stress and anxiety to blood pressure and blood sugars. It has even been found to improve sleep. The most important thing is to make exercise a habit and stick to it.

For more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/how-to-be-physically-active-while-social-distancing.html>

Community Health Assessment Coming Soon!

What is a Community Health Assessment?

A [Community Health Assessment \(CHA\)](#) is a tool used in public health to describe the health of a community. When conducting this assessment, the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD) will work with various community partners, including local school boards, health care providers, town leadership, and other local organizations. Together, FVHD and our partners will take a systematic and comprehensive approach to identifying health needs in our community, as well as existing strengths.

What is this data used for?

Knowing where our community has existing health needs helps FVHD better address existing weaknesses. Data derived from the CHA will inform the development of the [Community Health Improvement Plan \(CHIP\)](#), which will develop and implement strategies to fill the gaps that the CHA identified. Included in a CHIP is a plan to measure improvement over time.

Both the CHA and the CHIP are required steps in FVHD's goal of achieving public health accreditation.

Danger Lurking at Home

National Poison Prevention Week starts March 20th this year. Are you aware of what hazards you may have around your home and property?



Household poisonings are more likely than you may think.

In 2019, US poison control center provided guidance to over 2.1 million human poison exposures. That's approximately 6.4 exposures per 1,000 in the population. Children under age six are disproportionately likely to be exposed. For them, the rate was as high as 37.4 per 1,000 children in the US.

The vast majority of child exposures (over 99%) were unintentional. In children under six, the biggest culprits were exposures to cosmetics and personal care products, followed by cleaning substances and pain medications given at an incorrect dose. Although 83% of poison exposures reported to U.S. poison centers in 2019 were nontoxic, minimally toxic, or had at most a minor effect, those linked to death were linked to pain medications, fumes, or consumption of unknown drugs.

What can you do to keep your family safe?

Be mindful of strong chemicals during spring cleaning! Always fully read the directions and keep areas where cleaners are used well-ventilated. Do not mix chemicals unless directed to by the label. When not in use, store chemical cleaners in their original containers and out of reach of children and pets.

Spring Forward!
Change the batteries in your carbon monoxide detectors when you change your clocks.

Keep the number of the US Poison Control Center on hand in case of exposure: 1-800-222-1222

Help is also available online:
<https://www.webpoisoncontrol.org/>

Be mindful in your garden, too. Daffodils are a common spring-time flower, but not everyone is aware that all parts of this plant are toxic! Educate kids to look but not touch, and keep bulbs well-

marked as they can easily be mistaken for onions.



Colorectal Cancer



March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer is a potentially lethal disease of the lower digestive system. Each year, about 150,000 Americans are diagnosed with this disease, and about 1 in 24 will develop this cancer in their lifetime. For this reason, doctors recommend routine screenings. Previously, these started at age 50. **However, as of last year, the recommended age to start routine screening for colorectal cancer has moved to 45**, or sooner for those with a family history.

Your physician will typically discuss screening options with you at your yearly physical. With early detection rates dropping off due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, don't let yourself be one of the unlucky ones to find out too late.

COVID Updates

As we reach the 2 year anniversary of the declaration of a public health emergency, we're very excited to come to you with good news! Cases have continued to decrease in the Farmington Valley since the Omicron spike that peaked here in the first week of January.

Last week, the CDC issued new benchmarks for decision-making about wearing masks in public. These are based on case rates and

hospitalization data. FVHD serves towns in Hartford and Litchfield Counties, both of which are in Low transmission as of the end of February. This means that masks are optional indoors unless a private establishment indicates otherwise.

February 28th also marks the end of state-wide mask mandates in schools and childcare centers. The State Department of Education and Office of Early Childhood, in collaboration with the State Department of Public Health, have elected not to continue the mandates past February. School districts and private childcare facilities still have the right to issue masking requirements within their buildings.

Mask-wearing remains an effective strategy to protect yourself and those around you. Getting vaccinated and boosted continues to be the best way to protect yourself as well, so get the shot if you're eligible.

Helpful Resources:

- [Cost-Free State-Supported COVID Testing Sites](#)
- [Vaccine Finder](#)

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.

