



Health Matters

a quarterly publication of the
Farmington Valley Health District
Summer 2022

Serving the towns of:

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

Ready or Not, Here They Come....

The weather is warm again, and that means bugs are out in full force.

Ticks

Tick-borne diseases are spread by the bite of an infected tick and can be caused by bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Those in CT include Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, *Borrelia miyamotoi* disease, Ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease, Powassan virus disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Tularemia. The most reported tick-borne disease in CT is Lyme disease. Lyme disease is transmitted by the deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) pictured below. Neither the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), nor the lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*) are able to transmit Lyme Disease. However, the lone star tick is able to transmit other tick-borne diseases.

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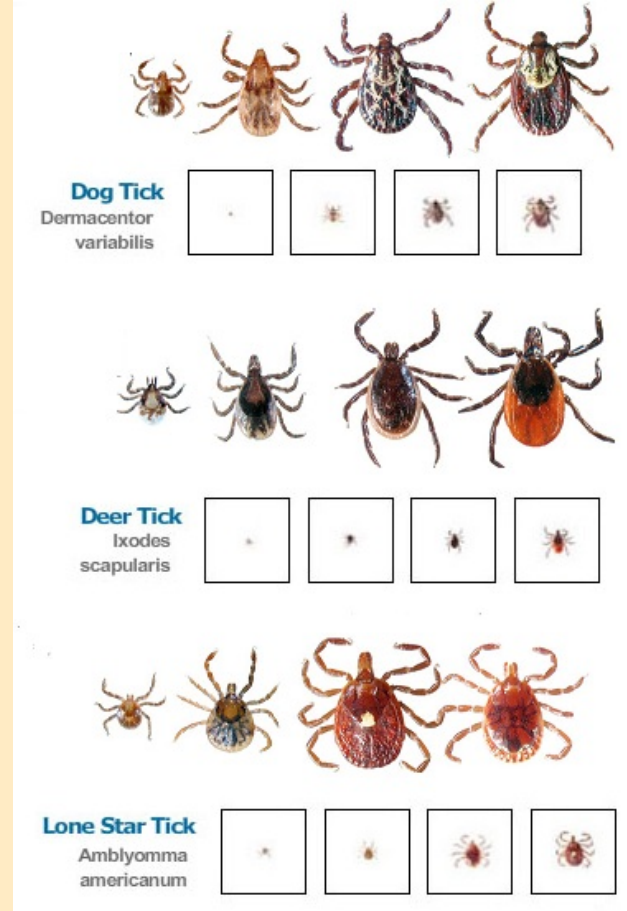
Visit our website at www.fvhd.org

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

Reported incidence of Lyme disease transmission in CT, fluctuate due to environmental conditions, weather, changes in surveillance methods and other factors. The number of reported confirmed cases decreased from 2,108 in 2013 to 400 in 2020.

Prevention methods include personal protective measures to avoid tick bites. Environmental modifications to reduce ticks in areas where people recreate may provide some prevention. See the [CDC webpage](#) for additional information on how to prevent tick bites.

To submit a deer tick for testing that has fed on a human please complete the [Tick Submission Form](#). Complete the form and submit the form and the tick to:



Tick Identification

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Tick Testing Laboratory
Jenkins-Waggoner Building
123 Huntington Street
New Haven CT, 06511

Mosquitoes



Mosquito-borne diseases are spread by the bite of an infected mosquito and may be caused by viruses or parasites. The CT DPH conducts surveillance for several mosquito borne illnesses including Chikungunya virus, Dengue, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Malaria, West Nile virus, Yellow fever and Zika virus.

West Nile Virus is the most commonly identified mosquito-borne illness in CT. Rates vary from year to year, [from a low of 4 cases in 2013 to a high of 23 in 2018, and 9 reported in 2020](#). Many factors, that are unpredictable and require surveillance each season, may influence the risk of transmission to people. These factors include weather, the number of infected birds and the number of mosquitoes that spread the virus.

As with tick-borne disease, prevention of mosquito-borne illness requires prevention of mosquito bites. Prevention methods include reducing mosquito breeding areas by removing all standing water on your property. Mosquitoes are able to breed in very small amounts of water that may be found in discarded tires, clogged drains, trash buckets, and any other receptacle that is able to hold water. Additionally, using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants, and avoiding going outside at dawn and dusk will help reduce your risk of a mosquito bite. See the [CDC webpage](#) for additional information on mosquito bite prevention.

Keep Your Cookouts Food-Safe!

With warmer weather, more people are gathering for outdoor picnics, barbeques, and get-togethers of all sizes. Unfortunately, rising temperatures can quickly raise the number of bacteria multiplying in improperly stored food.

To protect yourself, family and friends from foodborne illness, follow these precautions:

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES	
as measured with a food thermometer	
GROUND MEAT & MEAT MIXTURES	Internal temperature
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160 °F
Turkey, Chicken	165 °F
FRESH BEEF, PORK, VEAL & LAMB	145 °F
	with a 3 minute rest time
POULTRY	
Chicken & Turkey, Whole	165 °F
Poultry Parts	165 °F
Duck & Goose	165 °F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165 °F
HAM	
Fresh (raw)	160 °F
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140 °F
EGGS & EGG DISHES	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg Dishes	160 °F
SEAFOOD	
Fin Fish	145 °F
	or flesh is opaque and separates easily with fork
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	Flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Milky white or opaque & firm
LEFTOVERS & CASSEROLES	165 °F

Image Source: [FDA](#)

Handwashing

- Wash hands between each task when prepping food (e.g., cooking hamburgers and then prepping a salad).
- All surfaces should be washed between tasks.

Pack and transport food safely

- Transport food in coolers with ice or frozen gel packs in order to maintain a safe temperature of 41°F or less.
- Use separate coolers for beverages and foods such as meat, pasta salads, etc.
- If transporting raw meats, separate them further from ready to eat foods such as salad.
- Keep coolers closed to ensure temperature is maintained.

Prepare and store food safely onsite

- Reference the "Safe Cooking Temperatures" infographic above for proper cooking temperatures for meat.
- Hot foods should be served immediately or kept at 135 °F or greater.
- Do not reuse platters that were used for raw foods to store cooked foods to avoid cross contamination.
- Marinate food in the fridge, not on the counter to ensure proper temperature.
- Cold food should be stored on ice during service.

Know when to discard food

- Hot and Cold food should not sit out longer than 2 hours (1 hour when temperatures are above 90°F) or it must be promptly discarded.

Keep Your Family Safe Around Water

Summer is just around the corner! Many people will go to pools, ponds, lakes, and rivers to cool off and enjoy time in the water. Water safety is important for all ages especially for children.



Image Source

According to the [American Red Cross](#), ten people die each day from drowning and on average two of them are under age 14. In children ages 1-4, drowning is the 2nd leading cause of death, second only to birth defects. Furthermore, for every child who dies from drowning, another five receive emergency care for nonfatal submersion injuries.

For children under the age of five, 87% of fatal drownings happen in home pools or hot tubs. Children ages 5 to 17 are more likely to drown in a pond, lake, or river.

Here are tips for what you can do to prevent unintentional drowning:

- If your kids don't know how to swim, sign them up for a swim class and take a water safety course. The American Red Cross offers many [free online courses](#) about water safety.
- Swim in a designated swimming area.
- Know the conditions (water temperature, currents, and weather) – especially in the Farmington River.
- DO NOT SWIM ALONE! Always swim with a buddy.
- Avoid distractions and pay close attention to your children when they are in the water.
- NEVER leave a child unattended near the water, even a wading

pool is a drowning risk.

- Ensure all pools and hot tubs have approved barriers and fencing installed.
- Always wear a life jacket when boating, kayaking, or sailing.
- NEVER mix alcohol and swimming/boating.
- If ever caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore instead of towards it since most rip currents are an average of 100 feet wide. Relax and breathe keeping your head above water and swim until you are out of the current.
- [Learn how to administer CPR.](#)

Chemical Safety is important too!

FVHD inspects all public indoor and outdoor swimming pools. We ensure that water quality, proper signage, safety equipment, restrooms, and chemical storage are all up to current health code.

FVHD inspectors check all outdoor public pools at least once a month during the months of May through September, and all indoor public pools every three months throughout the year.



FVHD staff also work with pool operators to ensure they are trained and do regular water testing.

What can close a pool?

When water clarity is insufficient, pool disinfectant levels are not maintained, or structural issues present a safety hazard, a pool will be closed and signs will alert the public of the closure.

When the pool has conformed to the health code, it will be re-inspected before being reopened for the public.

For more information about pool safety, watch our Health Matters Episode

Be Prepared — Hurricane Season is Here

Hurricane Season official kicks off June 1st. Are you ready?

[Ready.gov](#) has your comprehensive list of what you should have on hand in the event of a severe weather emergency. Don't wait until a storm is imminent and store shelves are running low on essential supplies.

Basic Disaster Supplies

- One gallon of water per person in your household per day - enough for several days
- Several day supply of non-perishable food
- Flashlight
- First Aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Plastic sheeting & duct tape
- Wrench or pliers (for turning off utilities)
- Manual can opener
- Backup battery for cell phone charge

Additional Supplies to Consider

- Masks, soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes
- Medications - both prescription and over the counter
- Contact lens solution, feminine hygiene products and other toiletries
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, etc
- Pet food and additional water for pets
- Cash
- Important family documents in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bags or warm blankets for all household members
- Complete change of clothing and comfortable shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Activities to keep kids entertained in the event of power loss or relocation

Already have a kit from previous years?

- Has the nonperishable food been stored correctly?
- Are any items expired?
- Do the batteries still work?
- Has your family grown or needs changed?

More Resources

<https://www.ready.gov/disability>

<https://www.ready.gov/pets>

<https://www.ready.gov/seniors>

<https://www.ready.gov/financial-preparedness>

Service Opportunity: UR Community Cares



Every day, thousands of people age into the population segment of adults age 65 and up. Many seniors and residents with a physical

disability need a little assistance to maintain their independence at home; volunteers can help to fill in the gaps that family, paid care, and other services don't cover. Communities and families have changed over the last decade, but the desire to be at home certainly hasn't.

UR Community Cares is an organization that helps seniors and the physically disabled maintain their independence. Those in need get free services through the background checked volunteer network all at no cost, with an easy online system for asking for the specific things they need help with.

Volunteers provide non-clinical acts of kindness including:

- helping with laundry/housework
- traveling to a doctor's appointment/transportation
- teaching technology/companionship
- gardening/yard work

UR Community Cares received a grant from the Avon and East Granby Greater Together Community Funds so all services are at no cost. Volunteers are matched to neighbors aged 70+, or 18+ with a physical disability (temporary or permanent), using its secure digital platform www.URCommunityCares.org. Please sign up and select the categories for which you would like to volunteer or receive services. Notifications will be emailed about volunteer opportunities within 15 miles of your home. Contact Michelle, president of UR Community Cares, at 860-430-4557 with questions or to sign up.

Are Your Teens Getting Enough Sleep?

The Problem:

According to the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey- American youth are tired!

The survey found that **6 in 10 Middle Schoolers (57.8%)** were getting less sleep than the American Academy of Sleep Medicine's recommended 9-12 hours per night and that almost **8 in 10 High Schoolers (79%)** did not get the 8-10 hours recommended for their optimal health.



The Health Implications:

We all know that teenagers are notorious for their nocturnal activities – but we now know that there are far larger implications to their health than just feeling tired in their morning French class!

According to a 2015 [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) study of nearly 16,000 students, insufficient sleep in children and adolescents is associated with increased risk of:

- obesity,
- diabetes, injuries,
- poor mental health,
- attention and behavior problems,
- poor academic performance.

The Solution:

To help to ensure that your children and teens are getting enough sleep to stay healthy think about trying some of these strategies:

- Set bedtimes that allow for the recommended amount of sleep — 9-12 hours for ages 6-12 and 8-10 hours for ages 13-18— and stick to them!
- Reduce screen time in the hour before bed and remove electronic devices (laptops, tv's, phones) from your child's room as light exposure from LED screens close to bedtime is associated with poor sleep quality.
- Establish a routine that supports rest. For young children have bath and stories each night to promote a calming and regular routine. For teens consider meditation, audio books, calming music to set the scene for relaxation
- Make the bedroom a cozy place for sleep! Watch TV in a different room so that this space is preserved for sleep.

Remember that as a parent you are modeling behaviors that can help your child make good choices about their health. Prioritize getting sufficient rest as a family – you will all have more energy and a better mood to engage in activities when you are all rested!

Try this sleep calculator to see how much rest the experts recommend you should be getting each night based on your age:

<https://sleepeducation.org/healthy-sleep/bedtime-calculator/>

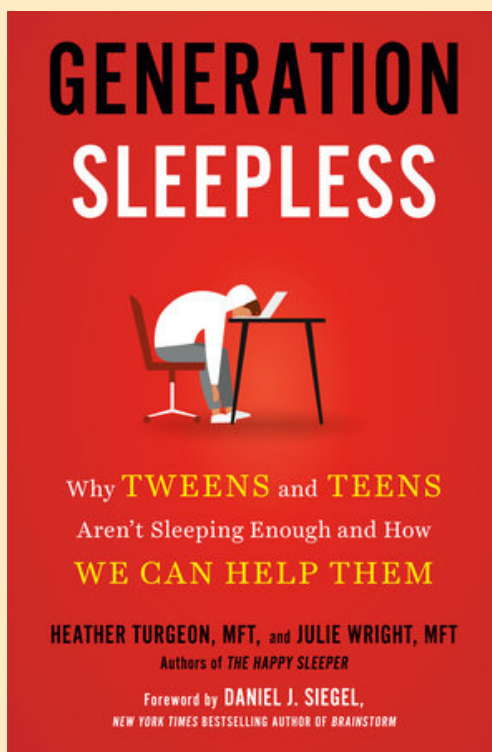
Health Matters Book Club

A new feature for our newsletter will be some book reviews of great health related books that will get you thinking, talking, and hopefully making some changes to your lifestyle.

Generation Sleepless

Why Tweens and Teens Aren't Sleeping Enough and How We Can Help Them

Heather Turgeon, MFT and Julie Wright, MFT



Overview

Our teens are caught in the perfect storm of screens, academic overload, hormones and nocturnal tendencies and they are physically and mentally tired! This great new book by the authors of *'The Happy Sleeper'* takes a deep dive into the alarming health implications of lack of sleep to our teens.

With the rise in mental health challenges being reported by our adolescents, this important and easy to read book helps us to better understand the correlations between lack of sleep and anxiety and depression and the chronic stress this generation is reporting.

The book offers helpful advice and action steps for parents wanting to address the sleep imbalance in their teens as well as offering insightful suggestions for teachers, principals, colleges, and policy makers in prioritizing our young people's health. The authors also address the mental health epidemic we are facing by examining the sleep recession that we are seeing as technology and academic demands begin to steal more time away from self-care and the important rest that teens brains need to grow.

An excellent read that will change forever the way you think about sleep.

After reading this book there are some things you and your family can do to apply what you have learned:

1. Create a sleep calendar for your family and monitor your sleep

for a week. Think about including things like time went to bed, time turned off the light, time woke up, quality of sleep, activities done prior to sleep (e.g., watched movie, read book, played video game, had a shower, etc).

2. Analyze your families sleep patterns and habits. See if you can identify factors that might be leading to lower quality sleep.
3. Create a sleep friendly "Do and Don't" list for the family. Identify actions that help promote restful sleep and those that interfere with it. Put the list somewhere where everyone can see it.
4. Think about using the 'parent fade tool' and how you can use it to help your teenager gain more independence with less parental 'nagging'.
5. Think about having regular family meetings. Talk openly as a family about the implications of not getting enough sleep and how it may affect the quality of function/life. Share some of your own experiences of being less able to function well at work when you have less sleep.
6. Be a role model. If your family sees you prioritizing sleep and changing routine to promote better sleep there is a good chance that other family members may follow as well!

Health Data to Inform Health Department Priorities

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. It involves analyzing existing health data from our community, as well as bringing in community stakeholders to determine what additional data needs to be collected.

What is this data used for?

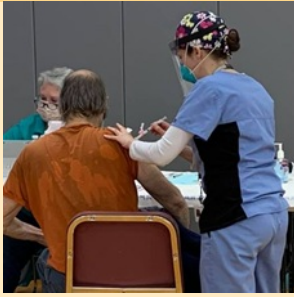
Understanding the current state of health in a community is critical to the work of a local health department. The CHA looks not only at who lives in our community, but what conditions impact their health and in what ways. Data derived from the CHA will inform the development of the [Community Health Improvement Plan \(CHIP\)](#), which will guide implementation of strategies to address key public health issues that come to light during the CHA process.

What progress has FVHD made?

A lot! Before the pandemic, we met several times with our CHA Advisory Group, a coalition of community members representing diverse organizations and agencies to review existing data. In resuming that work, we have been working diligently to compile the data to reflect current health indicators and demographics in the Farmington Valley.

This summer, we will be reconvening that group to both review existing data and begin collecting new data on topics, such as mental health and obesity, to round out our understanding of what factors impact health in the Farmington Valley.

COVID-19: What Have We Been Doing at FVHD?



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Farmington Valley Health District has supported our community through the following efforts:

- Providing subject matter expertise on infection response and control to our residents and businesses
- Disseminating weekly updates on COVID-19 in our community to town officials, school administrators, and local representatives, and posting reports to our website for access by the general public
- Meeting regularly with town officials, school superintendents and nurses, early childcare providers, town senior centers, and long-term care and assisted living facilities to support the unique needs of each environment in responding to COVID-19
- Working with school administrations to reopen schools for in-person learning for the start of the 2020-2021 school year and continuing to work to maintain open, safe schools throughout the school year
- Working extensively with restaurants, salons, and local businesses with the goal of helping them safely stay open
- Conducting contact tracing for over 9,500 positive cases, providing both guidance to positive individuals as well as working with them to identify close contacts and thus slow the spread of COVID-19 within our community
- Conducting point-in-time testing for complex COVID-19 outbreaks at local businesses
- Running vaccine clinics for first responders, the general public, and school children, administering over 20,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine
- Providing vaccines to food service employees at their places of work to promote ease of access

FVHD continues to monitor the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and remains committed to responding to protect the health of our community. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our communities, the current guidance has transitioned to individual level responsibility and decision-making. FVHD will continue to monitor the evolving situation and work collaboratively with other agencies in the best interest of the public's health.

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.

