January is National Radon Action Month and this week is Radon Awareness Week! Did you know Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States after cigarette smoke? Radon is an odorless, invisible, radioactive gas naturally released from rocks, soil and water. In outdoor environments, radon levels are very low and generally not considered harmful.

Radon can get into homes or buildings through small cracks or holes and build up to higher levels. When you breathe in radon, radioactive particles from the decay of radon gas can get trapped in your lungs. It takes many years for lung cancer to develop, however most people do not show any symptoms until lung cancer is advanced and at that point it is harder to treat. For these reasons, it is important to take steps to reduce radon exposure throughout your life to help prevent the risk of lung cancer.

The only way to know if you have unsafe levels of radon in your home is by testing. Steps you can take to measure and reduce radon levels include the following:

- Purchase a Radon test kit and test your home.
- Send the kit to an approved laboratory to determine radon levels.
- If radon levels are high, find a qualified or state-certified radon contractor in your area to make any necessary repairs.

For more information please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) webpage: [https://www.cdc.gov/radon/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/radon/index.html)

**NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY®**

Please join us in supporting the American Heart Association’s national movement to raise awareness for heart disease and stroke by wearing red on **Friday, February 2, 2024**.

For more information on this initiative please visit: [https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/](https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/)
**HYPOTHERMIA VS. FROSTBITE**

**What is hypothermia?**
Hypothermia is caused by prolonged exposures to very cold temperatures. When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it’s produced. Lengthy exposures will eventually use up your body’s stored energy, which leads to lower body temperature.

**Who’s most at risk?**
- Older adults with inadequate food, clothing, or heating.
- Babies sleeping in cold bedrooms.
- People who remain outdoors for long periods of time.
- People who drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.

**Signs and Symptoms**

**Adults**
- Shivering
- Exhaustion or feeling very tired
- Confusion
- Fumbling hands
- Memory loss
- Slurred speech
- Drowsiness

**Babies**
- Bright, red cold skin
- Very low energy

**Don’t wait – take action**
Hypothermia is a medical emergency. If you notice any of the above signs, take the person’s temperature. If it is below 95° F, get medical attention immediately!

If you are not able to get medical help right away, try to warm the person up.

**What is frostbite?**
Frostbite is a type of injury caused by freezing. It leads to a loss of feeling and color in the areas it affects, usually extremities such as the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and severe cases can lead to amputation (removing the affected body part).

**Who’s most at risk?**
- Have poor blood circulation
- Are not properly dressed for extremely cold temperatures

**Signs and Symptoms**
- A white or grayish-yellow skin area
- Skin that feel unusually firm or waxy
- Numbness

**Don’t wait – take action!**
If you notice signs of frostbite on yourself or someone else, seek medical care.
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. However, it can be dangerous for babies, toddlers, and older adults. In fact, RSV is the leading reason that babies are hospitalized in the U.S.

This year, a new RSV vaccine is available for babies, older adults, and pregnant women.

- Adults aged 60 and older should talk to their healthcare provider about whether a RSV vaccine is appropriate for them.
- All babies should receive protection from a serious RSV illness using one of two options:
  - RSV vaccine for women who are 32–36 weeks pregnant
  - RSV antibody immunization for all babies younger than 8 months who are born during or entering their first RSV season.

You can view the CT DPH Respiratory Viral Disease Surveillance dashboard here.

### WEEKLY VIRAL RESPIRATORY DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) conducts surveillance for lab-confirmed COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

We monitor these illnesses through our disease surveillance systems from October to March each year. This data help us to understand the trends associated with each disease as well as the combined impact of these respiratory illnesses. From this, we can educate the public on prevention tips, targeting certain audiences that may be affected.

You can view the CT DPH Respiratory Viral Disease Surveillance dashboard here.

### RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. However, it can be dangerous for babies, toddlers, and older adults. In fact, RSV is the leading reason that babies are hospitalized in the U.S.

This year, a new RSV vaccine is available for babies, older adults, and pregnant women.

- Adults aged 60 and older should talk to their healthcare provider about whether a RSV vaccine is appropriate for them.
- All babies should receive protection from a serious RSV illness using one of two options:
  - RSV vaccine for women who are 32–36 weeks pregnant
  - RSV antibody immunization for all babies younger than 8 months who are born during or entering their first RSV season.

Parents, expecting parents, and older adults should talk to their doctor to see which product is appropriate and where they can get it.
Influenza (flu) and the common cold are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. Because the flu and the common cold have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone.

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold and symptoms are typically more intense and begin more abruptly. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose than people who have the flu. Symptoms of the flu can include a fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue.

If you believe you may be sick with the flu please call your doctor to talk about getting tested and the use of antiviral medication.

**PREVENT SEASONAL FLU**

It’s not too late to get your flu vaccine!

**If you are still in need of your flu vaccine, call our Clinic at (203) 630-4234.**

There are also everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home from work and school to limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. Also, follow up with your healthcare provider for testing and treatment recommendations.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects that may have been contaminated with viruses that cause flu.
- Improving air quality, such as opening windows or using air purifiers, can help reduce the amount of virus you are exposed to.
COVID-19 PREVENTION STRATEGIES

There are ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19:
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, including recommended updated doses.
- Maintain ventilation improvements.
- Avoid contact with people who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Follow recommendations for isolation if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or recommendations for what to do if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- If you are at high risk of getting very sick, talk with a healthcare provider about additional prevention actions.

Information about COVID-19 vaccines can be found HERE.

A full list of clinics available in Connecticut can be found at https://www.vaccines.gov/. Search by zip code and type of vaccine desired. Please call before going to ensure dates, times, and supply is correct.

Stay up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines! The CDC recommends the 2023–2024 updated COVID-19 vaccines for everyone 6 months and older. To read the updated guidance by age please click here. If you have additional questions or concerns about vaccination, please talk with your healthcare provider.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER: Community Health Center, Inc. in Meriden no longer offers public vaccination clinics. If you are in need of a COVID-19 vaccine or updated vaccine please call (860) 347-6971 to make an appointment.

The following locations are offering COVID-19 vaccines in Meriden:
- **Walgreens** 134 State Street  
  (203) 634-3241
- **Stop & Shop** 485 Broad Street  
  (203) 238-1261
- **Walgreens** 825 East Main Street  
  (203) 238-0910
- **Walgreens** 425 West Main Street  
  (203) 238-0910
- **Walgreens** 825 East Main Street  
  (203) 238-0910
- **Walgreens** 425 West Main Street  
  (203) 238-0910
- **CVS** 839 East Main Street  
  (203) 235-8285
- **CVS** 540 West Main Street  
  (203) 237-8984
- **CVS** 153 Broad Street  
  (203) 237-8997
- **CVS** 474 Chamberlain Hwy  
  (203) 634-6060

More locations for COVID-19 vaccine providers can easily be found by visiting: Vaccines.gov
COVID-19 TESTING INFORMATION

FREE COVID-19 HOME TESTS KITS

Every U.S. household can again place an order to receive four COVID-19 rapid tests delivered directly to their home.

For more information please visit: https://www.covid.gov/tests

Do you have a home COVID-19 test kit at home?

Check the expiration! Many brands of COVID-19 home test kits have had an expiration date extension through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Click here for the list of expiration date extensions.

PCR TESTING

GoHealth Urgent Care
482 S Broad Street
(203) 439-4485

By Appointment Only - Call ahead

CVS Pharmacy
679 E Main Street or 153 Broad Street
(203) 237-8997 (E Main Street)
(203) 237-8997 (Broad Street)

By Appointment Only – Call ahead

Walgreens Pharmacy
825 E Main Street or 425 W Main Street
(203) 238-0910 (E Main Street)
(203) 639-8166 (W Main Street)

By Appointment Only - Call ahead

Search for a no-cost COVID-19 testing location using the CDC’s tool: https://testinglocator.cdc.gov/
**EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WITH COVID-19?**

**FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE**

Immediately – start wearing a mask as soon as you find out you were exposed. Start counting from Day 1:
- Day 0 is the day of your last exposure to someone with COVID-19
- Day 1 is the first full day after your last exposure
- Continue wearing a mask for 10 full days.

You can still develop COVID-19 up to 10 days after you have been exposed. Take **extra precautions** if you will be around people who are **more likely to get very sick from COVID-19**.

- Watch for symptoms such as fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or **other COVID-19 symptoms**. **If you develop symptoms** isolate immediately, get tested, and stay home until you know the result. If your test result is positive, follow the **isolation recommendations**.

- Get tested at least 5 full days after your last exposure, even if you don’t develop symptoms. If you test negative, continue taking precautions through day 10. If you test positive, isolate immediately.

**ISOLATION CALCULATOR**

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 – regardless of symptoms and vaccination status – should isolate from others to prevent the spread of the illness. This means staying home from work and school!

The CDC’s **isolation calculator** allows you to determine how long you must isolate if you have COVID-19. It also tells you what precautions to take if you have, or have been exposed to, COVID-19. It’s a great tool!

If you have questions about exposure or isolation guidance, please call our office at 203-630-4221.
MERIDEN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Working for Our Community

165 Miller Street Meriden, CT 06450
(203) 630-4226
Monday–Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

FOR ALL UPCOMING EVENTS AND NEWS:

City of Meriden Health & Human Services Department
Scan the QR code to visit our website www.meridenhealth.com

CLINICAL SERVICES
(203) 630-4234

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
(203) 630-4226

PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION
(203) 630-4288

MERIDEN SCHOOL READINESS
(203) 630-4222

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)
(203) 630-4245

JUVENILE ASSISTANCE AND DIVERSION BOARD (JAD)
(203) 639-5058

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
(203) 630-4221

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES
(203) 630-4239

SENIOR CENTER
22 WEST MAIN STREET
(203) 237-0066