MERIDEN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



November 2026

MONTHLY HEALTH Newsletter

WWW.MERIDENHEALTH.COM

CONTACT INFO

165 Miller Street
Meriden, CT 06450

(203) 630-4226

Monday-Friday
8:00am - 4:30pm

Clinic Services
(203) 630-4234

Environmental Health
(203) 630-4226

Public Health Education
(203) 630-4288

Meriden Early Start
(203) 630-4222

Youth Services
(203) 639-5058

Public Health Emergency Preparedness
(203) 630-4288

School Health
(203) 630-4239

Senior Center
22 W. Main Street
(203) 237-0066

THANKSGIVING GAME PLAN: A HEALTHY, SAFE HOLIDAY FOR EVERYONE



Thanksgiving is the perfect time to gather with family and friends, enjoy delicious food, and cheer on your favorite football team! But between turkey, the touchdowns, and the tempting desserts, it is important to keep health and safety in the game. Here are a few simple food safety tips, so you can enjoy all the holiday fun while protecting yourself and your loved ones.

Food Safety is the MVP!
No one wants foodborne illness to spoil their Thanksgiving celebration. Protect your holiday meal by following these food safety plays:

- **Wash up:** Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before preparing food and after handling raw turkey.
- **Prevent cross-contamination:** Keep raw poultry and its juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Use separate cutting boards and utensils.
- **Cook to the right temperature:** Use a food thermometer to ensure the turkey reaches 165°F in the thickest part of the breast and the innermost parts of the thigh and wing. Stuffing should also reach 165°F. *When it comes to food safety, don't guess, use a thermometer!*
- **Thaw safely:** Never thaw a turkey on the kitchen counter. The best way to thaw a frozen raw turkey is by placing it in the refrigerator. This is because the refrigerator provides a consistent, safe temperature for the turkey to thaw. This can take some time, so allow one day of thaw for every 4 to 5 pounds of turkey. Once the turkey is completely thawed, it can be stored in the refrigerator for another two days.
- **Refrigerate leftovers promptly:** Put leftovers away within two hours of serving, using shallow containers for faster cooling.

Need to talk turkey? You can call the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line at 1-800-288-8372 or text (844) 877-3456.

City offices, including the Meriden Senior Center, will be closed on

- Wednesday, November 11, 2026 in observance of Veteran's Day.
- Thursday, November 26, 2026 in observance of Thanksgiving.



MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON



The holiday season can be a time of joy, connection, and celebration, but it can also bring added stress, emotional challenges, and feelings of loneliness. Between family gatherings, financial pressures, busy schedules, and expectations to make the season special, it is easy to overlook our mental health. As we enter the holiday season, we encourage residents to prioritize self-care, stay connected, and remember that it is okay to ask for help.

4 Ways to Support Your Mental Well-Being

1. Set realistic expectations. You do not have to attend every gathering, purchase every gift, or meet every holiday expectation. Focus on what matters most to you and give yourself permission to say no when needed.

2. Make time for yourself. Take breaks from busy schedules and make time for activities that help you recharge. A short walk, listening to music, reading, or practicing deep breathing can help reduce stress.

3. Maintain healthy routines. Try to get enough sleep, eat balanced meals, stay physically active, and limit alcohol. Consistent daily habits can help support emotional well-being during a busy season.

4. Make space for difficult emotions. Holidays can bring up memories of loved ones who have passed away or remind us of difficult life circumstances. Allow yourself to grieve, talk with someone you trust, and create new traditions that feel meaningful to you.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Need someone to talk to? Help is available. Call or text 988 to connect with a trained crisis counselor, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Support is available for anyone experiencing emotional distress, mental health struggles, or a substance use crisis.

FALL BACK: CHECK YOUR CLOCKS, DETECTORS, AND EMERGENCY KIT!

Sunday, November 1, 2026, marks the end of Daylight Saving Time. As you turn your clocks back, remember this important reminder: Set your clocks, check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and make sure your emergency preparedness kit is complete! “Fall Back” and “Spring Ahead” days are the perfect time to take a few minutes to ensure your home and family are prepared for emergencies.

Check Your Emergency Preparedness Kit



As you adjust the clocks around your home, take a moment to review your emergency preparedness kit. Make sure you have essential supplies, including:

- Bottled water
- Non-perishable food
- First aid supplies
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Personal hygiene items
- Important documents

Reviewing your kit twice a year helps you identify expired items, replace used supplies, and make updates as your family’s needs change.

Test Your Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors play a vital role in keeping your household safe, but they can only work properly when maintained. Use the time change as a reminder to replace batteries according to the manufacturer’s recommendations and test each unit to ensure it is functioning correctly.

While checking your detectors, review the manufacturer’s recommended replacement schedule. If a detector has reached the end of its service life, replace it with a new one to help keep your home protected.

NATIONAL DIABETES MONTH



November is National Diabetes Month, a time to raise awareness about diabetes, recognize the warning signs, and encourage healthy habits.

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. It affects about 38 million Americans, including adults and youth. Diabetes can damage the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and heart, and is linked to some types of cancer.

Small steps can make a difference! Lifestyle habits such as planning healthy meals, being physically active, getting enough sleep, and not smoking may help you prevent diabetes.

If you have been diagnosed with diabetes it is important to:

- Manage your diabetes ABC's - A1C test, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- Take your medication on time and as prescribed.
- Work with your healthcare team to manage your diabetes. This may include your primary care doctor, diabetes specialist, or registered dietitian.

The Meriden Senior Center will be hosting a **diabetes prevention presentation** on November 17 from 10:00 - 11:00am. Guests will learn about ways to reduce your risk of developing diabetes through healthy lifestyle choices, nutrition, and physical activity. Take this opportunity to gain helpful tips and information to support your health and well-being! This program is open to the public. To sign up, please call the Meriden Senior Center at (203) 237-0066 or sign up in person by visiting the Main Office at 22 West Main Street.

REMINDING RESIDENTS THAT STAYING HEALTHY TAKES COURAGE



Illnesses During the Holiday Season

The holidays are coming, and large gatherings, travel, and more time indoors can mean more exposure to viruses that can cause respiratory illness. Fortunately, we have tools to help us stay healthy so we can enjoy the time we spend with our families, friends, and neighbors. You can protect yourself and others by following these tips:

- We can't say it enough - wash those hands frequently with soap and water. When soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes by using a tissue or cough and sneeze into your elbow. It is important to not cough or sneeze into your hands to avoid spreading germs to others. Remember to wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If you have respiratory virus symptoms, stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick). Symptoms include fever, chills, cough, runny nose, and headache.
- Clean high-touch surfaces often, such as light switches, doorknobs, countertops, TV remotes, and electronics, including your cell phone. If you have children, cleaning toys and other commonly used products can also prevent the spread of germs that can cause respiratory illness.

Flu Shots Are Still Available

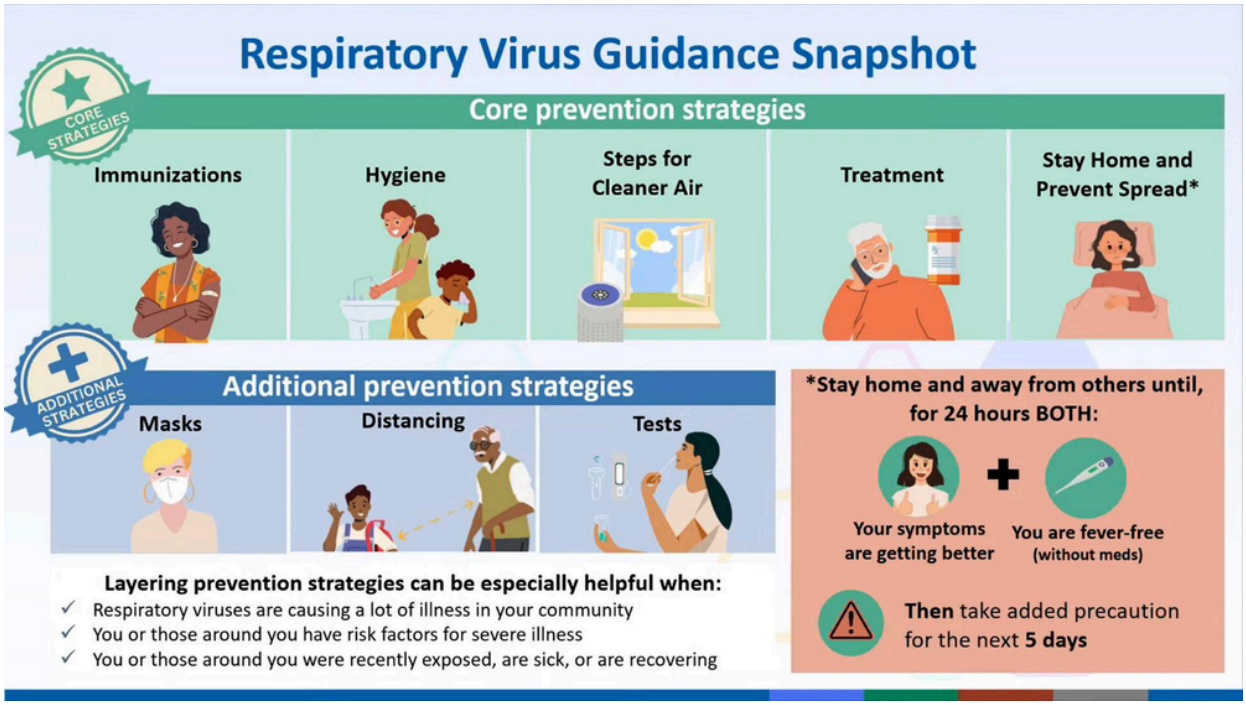


Flu shots are FREE for Meriden residents ages 18 and younger, regardless of insurance status. Adults 19+ who are uninsured or underinsured can get a free flu shots from us as well, through the Connecticut Vaccines for Adults (CVFA) Influenza Pilot Program. We accept ConnectiCare, Cigna, Aetna, Medicare, and Medicaid. FluBlok (not included in the pilot program) costs $40 (cash or check).

Clinic Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00am - 4:30pm
Extended Hours (until 6:00 PM): November 10 and 24; December 8 and 29.

Call our Clinic at (203) 630-4234 to schedule an appointment.

RESPIRATORY VIRUS DISEASE GUIDANCE



Immunizations for Respiratory Viruses Prevention

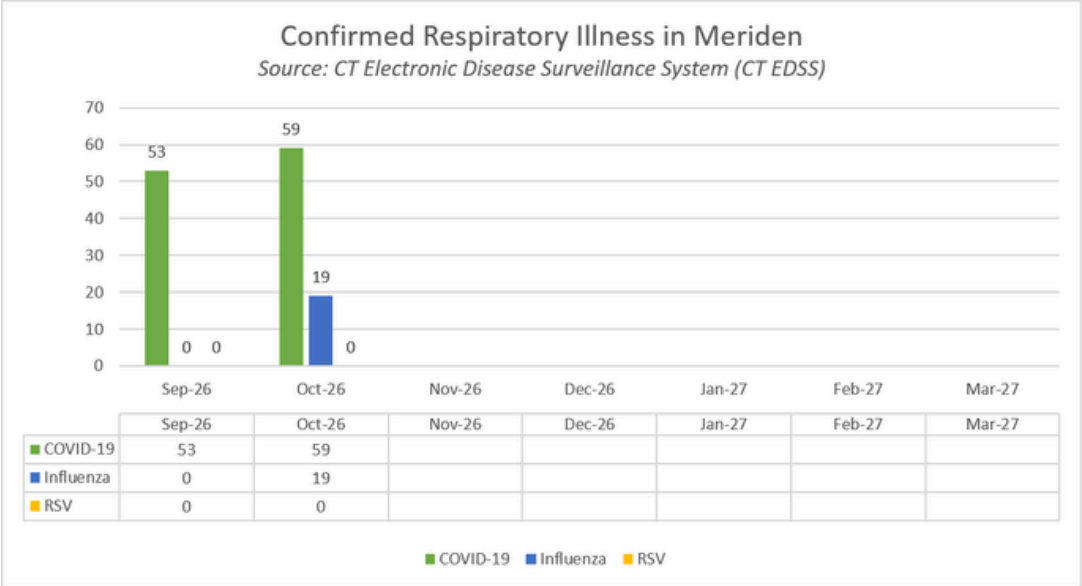
Staying up to date on COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccines helps prevent serious illness. The Connecticut Department of Public Health recommends:

- **Flu:** Everyone 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine.
- **RSV:** Adults 75 and older should receive one RSV vaccine. Adults ages 50–74 at high risk may also be eligible. Pregnant women can get vaccinated between 32–36 weeks, and eligible infants may receive RSV antibodies.
- **COVID-19:** Everyone 6 months and older should get one COVID-19 vaccine annually. High-risk individuals may need an additional dose.

Talk with your healthcare provider about which vaccines are right for you. To find nearby vaccine providers for the COVID-19 or RSV vaccine, visit the Vax Assist website.

Confirmed Respiratory Illness in Meriden

We continue to monitor respiratory illness in Meriden, including COVID-19, RSV, and influenza. These illnesses are reportable to local health departments per state public health code. The numbers on the chart below do not include those who test positive via a home test, or those who are ill and do not test. Case numbers under 5 are not reported in the chart. Numbers are subject to change.



	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27
COVID-19	53	59					
Influenza	0	19					
RSV	0	0					

MERIDEN EARLY START



Join our Parent Ambassadors at these upcoming events:

Teddy Bear Clinic
November 5, 2026 from 4:30 - 6:00pm
165 Miller Street

Stop by to connect with Parent Ambassadors who will be providing resource bags and information about Meriden Early Start programs.

Hartford HealthCare's Medical Mission
November 7, 2026 from 9:00am - 2:00pm
John Barry Elementary School (124 Columbia Street)

Stop by the Parent Ambassadors' table at Hartford HealthCare's annual Medical Mission for fun giveaways, information about Meriden Early Start programs, and other helpful resources.

CT FOODSHARE MOBILE PANTRY

November 5 and 19:
The CT Foodshare mobile pantry will continue to be at Ceppa Field (83 Gale Ave in Meriden) every other Thursday from 1:00 - 2:00pm.

November 13 and 27:
The mobile pantry will also be at Mt. Hebron Church (84 Franklin St in Meriden) from 1:15-2:15pm.

Bring reusable bags. Sign up for alerts in case of cancellation by texting the word FOODSHARE to 85511. To find additional locations, click here.

LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE RESOURCES?

The Community Assistances webpage has information on food pantries, energy assistance, transportation, and more. If possible, we recommend that persons call before going to a site for services.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR SEASONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER & DEPARTMENT PODCAST CHANNELS



A Moment with Marley
Provides expert insights on disease prevention, family wellness, and updates from our Public Health Clinic.

Listen on Spotify here.
Listen on iHeartRadio here.
Listen on Apple Podcasts here.



Meriden Health Talk
Provides expert insights on a range of topics, including seasonal health and local updates and alerts.

Listen on Spotify here.
Listen on iHeartRadio here.
Listen on Apple Podcasts here.

If you would like to subscribe to our monthly seasonal health and quarterly life-saving overdose prevention and response newsletters, please click here or call (203) 630-4288. You will only need to provide your first name and email address. Your information will not be shared with anyone.

SENIOR CENTER NEWSLETTER

The November issue of the Meriden Senior Center newsletter is now available on our website - now in Spanish as well! Program highlights include:

- **Veteran's Day Celebration** on November 12 from 10:30 - 11:30am.
- **Senior Tech Support** every Thursday from 10:00am - 12:00pm.
- **Blood Pressure Checks with Hunters Ambulance** on November 24 from 10:00 - 11:00am.



Teddy Bear Clinic

Join the Meriden Department of Health and Human Services' Public Health Clinic for a fun and interactive event where children have a chance to play doctor with the favorite stuffed animal and learn how to keep their stuffy healthy!

Thursday, November 5, 2026
4:30 – 6:00pm
165 Miller Street

What to Expect:

A Check-Up With Your Favorite Stuffed Animal
Children learn about how to stay healthy while giving their stuffed animal a "check-up".

Community Resources
For parents and caregivers about our Department's programs and services.

B.Y.O.B.
Bring your own bear (or favorite stuffed animal)
Each child will receive their own doctor kit

Space is limited to 25 participants. Call our Public Health Educator at (203) 630-4288 to reserve a spot.

For children ages 3 and up and their parent/caregiver.

Meriden Department of Health and Human Services

Meriden Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with Rushford

Hartford HealthCare Rushford

QPR INSTITUTE



FREE Virtual QPR Suicide Prevention Training

A suicide prevention program designed to teach individuals how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

Friday, November 20, 2026

12:00 - 1:00 PM

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Participants will receive a certification as a QPR Gatekeeper upon completing the training.

To register contact: Elizabeth DeMerchant, Public Health Educator at edemerchant@meridenct.gov or (203) 630-4288

Hartford HealthCare
MidState Medical Center

Medical Mission 2026



John Barry Elementary School
124 Columbia Street, Meriden

Free Medical Services for Adults & Children

Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026
9 am to 2 pm

All are welcome.
No insurance needed.

- Health screenings
- Behavioral health services
- Lab tests
- Vaccines
- Prescriptions
- Reading glasses
- Community resources & more*

*Participating in free medical services will provide access to other services and benefits.

Servicios médicos gratuitos para adultos y niños

Sábado 7 de noviembre de 2026
9 am a 2 pm

Todos son bienvenidos.
No se necesita seguro.

- Exámenes médicos
- Servicios de salud conductual
- Análisis de laboratorio
- Vacunas
- Recetas
- Gafas de lectura
- Recursos comunitarios y mas*

*Si participa en los servicios médicos gratuitos, también podrá recibir otros servicios y beneficios.

Serviços médicos gratuitos para adultos e crianças

Sábado, dia 7 de novembro de 2026,
das 9h às 14h

Todos são bem-vindos.
Não precisa ter plano de saúde.

- Exames de saúde
- Serviços de saúde comportamental
- Exames laboratoriais
- Vacinas
- Receitas médicas
- Óculos de leitura
- Recursos comunitários e muito mais*

*A participação em serviços médicos gratuitos proporcionará acesso a outros serviços e benefícios.