

The UConn Buzz



THE NEW YEAR BRINGS COLD & FLU SEASON

The Flu

Flu season is upon us and there has been a recent spike in influenza activity. Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that is spread through the air and by direct contact with respiratory droplets.

Symptoms of the flu include:

- Sudden fever
- Aching muscles
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Eye pain

While anyone can contract the flu, the illness is especially dangerous for certain groups, including: people aged 65 and older; children younger than 2 years old; people of any age with chronic medical conditions, like asthma, diabetes, congestive heart failure, or lung disease; and pregnant women.

So far this season, the flu has contributed to three deaths of CT residents. According to the CT DPH "As of December 16, 2017, 355 laboratory confirmed cases of influenza have been reported which is an increase of 100 cases over the previous week & 144 Connecticut patients have been hospitalized with confirmed cases of influenza." Alan Siniscalchi, flu surveillance coordinator for the Connecticut Department of Public Health said "we are seeing a continued increase in activity." He added it's not unusual to see a lot of flu cases and hospitalizations in December, but the numbers are higher than normal. "We could be looking at a peak as early as late January, instead of February or March."

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu shot. Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino

strongly urged people who have not yet had a flu shot to get one. "With the winter months and holidays bringing people together, typically indoors, people need to protect themselves from bringing home a present that no one wants: the flu. It is not too late to get the flu vaccination, and people should not be deterred from getting the shot because of recent reports that the vaccine hasn't been as effective in other parts of the world," said Dr. Pino.

In the past individuals with egg allergies have been advised not to get the shot, but that has changed. New guideline updates recommendations from the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology state that doctors no longer need to ask patients about egg allergies before giving a flu shot.

The Common Cold

According to the Mayo Clinic the common cold is a viral infection of your nose & throat. It's usually caused by the Rhinovirus, but many viruses can cause a common cold. Children younger than six are at greatest risk of colds, but anyone can be affected. Most people recover from a common cold in a week or 10 days. Symptoms of a common cold usually appear one to three days after exposure to a cold-causing virus.

Symptoms of the common cold include:

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Congestion
- Mild headache
- Sneezing
- Low-grade fever
- Generally feeling unwell

Since the common cold is a virus, antibi-

otic will not be effective in treating the infection. Unlike the flu, the chance of the virus causing complications and leading to death is low. Prevention is the best measure in staying healthy this winter.

- **Wash your hands.** Clean your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water, and teach your children the importance of hand-washing.
 - **Disinfect your stuff.** Clean kitchen & bathroom countertops with disinfectant. Don't forget kids toys.
 - **Use tissues.** Sneeze and cough into tissues. Discard used tissues right away, then wash your hands carefully.
 - **Teach children to sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow** when they don't have a tissue. That way they cover their mouths without using their hands.
 - **Don't share.** Don't share drinking glasses or utensils with other family members. Use your own glass or disposable cups when you or someone else is sick.
 - **Avoid close contact** with anyone who has a cold.
 - **Choose your child care center wisely.** Look for a child care setting with good hygiene practices and clear policies about keeping sick children at home.
- Take care of yourself.** Eating well, getting exercise and enough sleep, and managing stress might help you keep colds at bay.
- If you do fall ill to the flu or a cold, remember to
- Getting plenty of rest
 - Drinking fluids
 - Gargling with warm salt water
 - Using cough drops or throat sprays

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Tolland Car Safety Seat Check - Thursday, January 4th, 4:30-6:30pm. Tolland Fire Station 240 - 3 Rhodes Rd, Tolland. Know for sure that your child is buckled in safely and correctly - every trip, every time. Come to Tolland Fire Department to get your car seat inspected for FREE. No appointment necessary, (snow date Jan. 11th).

Mansfield Community Center Free Open House Weekend - Friday-Sunday, January 5-7th. Come in and try the fitness center, indoors pools, teen center and more. There will be a FREE Family Fun Night on Friday from 5:30-8:30pm.

The Tolland Garden Paths January 2018 Gala Opening Saturday, January 6th, 9:30am, at the Tolland County Agricultural Center 24 Hyde Ave, Vernon. All gardeners are welcome, (snow date Jan. 13th).

Officer Brian Aseilton 5K Snow Dash - Sunday, January 7th, 1:30pm. 61 Alps Dr. East Hartford. Starts and finishes at Langford School, \$25.

The Last Green Valley long distance guided hike - Sunday, January 28th 12pm till 3pm. Starts at the Goodwin Forest Conservation Center, 23 Potter Rd, Hampton. FREE.

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is seeking input on biking and walking conditions throughout the 38 town region, this includes some EHHD towns such as Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland and Willington.

As part of the Capitol Region Complete Streets Plan, they have created an interactive map where you can report locations that need improved walking and biking facilities in the Metro Hartford region. This map will help inform our process as well as the network map and plan we develop. The comments will contribute to the regional recommendations for infrastructure improvements.

Please visit our website at www.crcog.org/csplan to learn more about the ongoing plan and to participate further.

The survey can be accessed at:

<http://crocogsurvey.com/>

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Sources: U.S. Surgeon General, Environmental Protection Agency, American Lung Association, CT Dept. of Public Health, Mayo Clinic, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Eatingwell.com.

Brussels sprouts and Chestnuts - From Eatingwell.com

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- ◆ 3/4 cup coarsely chopped chestnuts (about 4oz.)
- ◆ 1 Tablespoon butter
- ◆ 1/2 cup low fat, low sodium chicken broth
- ◆ 2 teaspoon chopped fresh sage
- ◆ 1 Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste
- ◆ 3 Tablespoons reduced-sodium chicken broth

DIRECTIONS

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add Brussels sprouts and cook until bright green and just tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain well.

Melt butter with oil and broth in a large skillet over medium heat. Add Brussels sprouts, chestnuts and sage and cook, stirring often, until heated through, 2 to 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.



January is Radon Awareness Month

Radon is a radioactive gas that can cause cancer. It occurs naturally when uranium breaks down, and turns into radium. The U.S. Surgeon General has warned that it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Radon is estimated to cause about 21,000 deaths per year according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

You cannot see, smell or taste radon, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home. In fact, the EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General urge all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes, schools and other buildings for radon.

Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon.

Where Can I Get a Radon Test Kit?

- The [National Radon Program Services at Kansas State University](#) offers discounted test kits available to purchase online. You may complete the test kit order form electronically and print it out to mail or fax in. You may download a radon test kit coupon and mail it in.
- [The Eastern Highlands Health District](#) has some free test kits available to residents of the towns they serve.
- [American Lung Association](#) sells kits for about \$15 on their website.

If your Radon test kit results are higher than normal and you should mitigate (fix) the problem right away.

To find a qualified professional. The [CT Department of Public Health Radon Program](#) is a great place to start.

Also, the [National Radon Safety Board](#) has a search function to help you find local mitigation professionals.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

