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City of Stamford Department
of Health & Social Services

Dec/Jan/Feb 2011/12

THE HEALTH EXCHANGE

Keep Moving this Winter!

As the frosty winter weather blows in, there's no excuse to put your exercise routine on hold until the spring thaw. Staying active with regular exercise is important all year long. Exercise improves our outlook and will go a long way to improve stress levels during the hustle of the holiday season.

Almost anyone can exercise outside safely in the winter, but please check with your doctor if you have health concerns or conditions such as asthma or heart disease. Here some tips to keep in mind when walking outside during the colder months:

Dress in Layers—Many of us head outdoors dressed too warmly. Exercise generates heat, so it's important to wear layers you can take off and put back on. If temps are especially frigid, consider wearing a scarf or face mask to warm the air before it enters your lungs.

Remember Sunscreen—Wear SPF year round, especially with glare of the sun off the snow.



Stay Hydrated— Drink plenty of fluids, even if you're not thirsty.

Protect Hands, Feet, & Ears—Hands and feet are vulnerable to frostbite because in cold weather, blood flow is concentrated on your body's core. Consider thermal socks and gloves. Know the signs of frostbite and watch your exposed skin.

Watch the Wind Chill—Weather extremes can make exercising outdoors dangerous, even if you're dressed warmly. When thermometers drop below zero, consider an indoor activity or taking a break for a day or two.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Winter Exercise Tips | 1 |
| New Employees | 1 |
| Turkey Trot | 2 |
| Letter from Director | 2 |
| WIC Update | 3 |
| Environmental Health | 4 |
| HIV Prevention | 5 |
| Carbon Monoxide | 6 |
| Announcements | 7 |

Welcome Aboard!

The Department of Health & Social Services was delighted to welcome two new members to our team this fall.

Sharon Cowan joined the Social Services team as Director of Mandated Services and will be coordinating housing issues such as relocation. Sharon previously worked for the City's Department of Social Services

as a Project Coordinator.

Nancy Howe is our new Account Clerk. She will assist the Department in a myriad of ways including accounts payable & receivable. She has also previously worked for the City of Stamford.

Congratulations to you both and welcome to the Department!

Turkey Trot

Thanks to all who came out to the City of Stamford's first Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving morning! Over 300 participants met in Stamford's new South End neighborhood to take part in this inaugural 5K fitness walk/run.

Experienced runners, teens, families, and even a few pets enjoyed the bright sunshine and crisp fall air as they burned calories before sitting down to their holiday celebrations.

The Department of Health & Social Services would like to extend a HUGE thank you to our sponsors who made the event so successful. Building Land Technology, Pacific Swim, Bike, Run, Fairway Market, WHIP Deli, Stamford EMS, Stamford Police Department and Robek's all worked to make the Turkey Trot fun for all.

We look forward to next year!



Letter from Anne Fountain, Dir. of Health & Social Services

On behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services, I'd like to wish the residents of Stamford a safe and happy holiday season. This winter, as temperatures drop, please be mindful of basic precautions that will keep your family and home safe during the next few months. This issue highlights the dangers of carbon monoxide in the home. Take a moment to read about the importance of installing carbon monoxide alarms and the ways you can reduce the risk of this deadly gas in your home and businesses.

Flu shots are still available at the Health Department. Please give strong consideration to getting a shot. Along with hand washing, it's the best defense against influenza. Call our nurses to schedule an appointment.

During the next several months, the Department will continue to strive to provide the Stamford community with strong customer service and pertinent public health information. We look forward to a New Year filled with good health!

The federally funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age five who are at nutrition risk. WIC provides nutritious foods to supplement diets, breastfeeding promotion and nutrition counseling/ education. Through close ties with other community and departmental services, the WIC Program provides referrals to health and social services.

The Stamford WIC program serves Stamford, with a small population from Greenwich, Darien and New Canaan and additionally, participants at the Norwalk WIC site.

Breastfeeding provides health, nutritional, emotional, and economic benefits for both the infant and mother. Also, breastfeeding offers both economic and environmental benefits for society.

Based on scientific, evidenced based data, breastfeeding is recognized by major medical organizations (such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Family Physicians, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM), World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), the American Dietetic Association, and the National Association of WIC Directors) as the preferred method of infant feeding. These organizations support breastfeeding for, at least, the first year of life. Breastfeeding promotion and support is a major goal of the Stamford WIC program. WIC has promoted breastfeeding as the optimal infant feeding choice, unless medically contraindicated.

The Stamford WIC Program has 6 Certified Lactation Counselors on staff. Pregnant participants are provided with breastfeeding information and support. Breastfeeding mothers are eligible to participate in WIC longer than non-breastfeeding mothers. In addition, exclusively breastfeeding mothers receive an enhanced food package. Breastfeeding mothers may receive breast pumps and other aides to help support the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.

As part of the "Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work" national WIC campaign, beginning in March

2011, Stamford WIC distributed Breastfeeding Information Bags in both the English and Spanish languages to first time prenatal participants. The bags contained a DVD, brochures for dads and grandparents, a book, breastfeeding tip cards, & an infant bib. Prenatal participants were asked to complete surveys on how valuable they found the bags.

In recognition of World Breastfeeding Week 2011, August 1-7, The Connecticut WIC Program of the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition (CBC) donated two books (La Leche League International's *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and *Mama's Milk/ Mama Me Alimenta*) to 24 selected libraries including the Ferguson Library in Stamford.

It is important to note that, in the state of Connecticut, breastfeeding mothers are protected by state law to breastfeed babies in public. According to a November 7th press release, the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition (CBC) awarded mini-grant funding to eleven businesses and organizations to establish supportive working environments for employed breastfeeding mothers.

For additional information from the Stamford WIC Program please call (203) 977-4385.

Website for information from the La Leche League of Greenwich/Stamford: <http://www.lllct.org/greenwich>

The following websites are available for further information:

- 1) La Leche League International
www.lalecheleague.org
- 2) American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org/breastfeeding
- 3) United States Breastfeeding Committee
www.usbreastfeeding.org
- 4) World Health Organization
www.who.int/topics/breastfeeding/en/
- 5) UNICEF
www.unicef.org/programme/breastfeeding
- 6) Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine
www.bfmed.org
- 7) Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition
www.breastfeedingct.org
- 8) 2011 Surgeon General's Call to Action
To Support Breastfeeding
www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/promotion/calltoaction.htm

Environmental Inspections Division

The City of Stamford's Department of Health and Social Services would like to extend a warm holiday greeting to all residents in the City of Stamford as well as the State of Connecticut.

Dress for the Season

During the fall and winter months, ensuring City residents are warm and safe is a high priority. The very old and very young are a major concern, as they are more likely to become sick and shut in their homes. Many older people do not have family and sometimes are forgotten during this time of the year. Please check on your neighbors if one is not seen for an extended period of time. Spread the joy of one's company with someone who has no one to share it with. When going out into the cold, try to wear as many clothing layers as possible. Don't forget your hat, scarf and gloves. This will help those with a low tolerance for the cold to stay warm.

Carbon Monoxide

Winter is also a time when many accidents occur in the home. During the time of your hustle and bustle, please take a few minutes to check that all smoke detectors in your home are working properly. A carbon monoxide detector is also recommended to be installed in the home. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless toxic gas that is formed as a product of incomplete combustion of carbon. It can cause headache, dizziness, weakness and fatigue at low concentration. High exposure of carbon monoxide can lead to fatality. Improperly vented or defective gas appliances can lead to seepage of carbon monoxide. When using a gas or wood fireplace, always make sure that the flue is open and never use a gas stove to heat your home.

Never use a charcoal grill inside your home and make sure if using a generator, that it is safely away from the house and any windows. If you are a landlord, please check all of your rental properties and ask your tenants if all supplied facilities are okay.

Fire Safety

Those with live Christmas trees should be sure that the tree is watered each day so that it does not become dry and develop into a potential fire hazard. It is essential to have smoke detectors in all rooms

that contain Christmas trees. Overloaded electrical outlets and hazardous wiring are a common cause of holiday related accidents. Worn out electrical cords and plugs must be replaced to reduce the cause of mishaps. Use multi outlet power strips if running many cords. Also, never overload one outlet with many plugs. Fires and burns have permanently destroyed the lives of many people. Young children are at greatest risk when fires happen because they have not learned how to react. The local Fire Marshal's Office is a valuable resource for more information on fire prevention. The Fire Marshal can educate you on escaping from fires and tell you how to stop your clothes from burning. You can also learn about hazardous combustible material stored within your home. Often as people, we become caught in the moment forgetting that the smallest thing can save lives.

Heating Information

Between October 1st and October 30th each year, a heating facility inspection report for multiple family dwellings containing seven or more units must be filed with the Environmental Inspections Division of the Department of Health and Social Services.

This ensures that the heating facility has been inspected by a licensed contractor who is capable in designing, repairing or constructing a heating facility so that it meets safe operating requirements as indicated in the Stamford City Code of Ordinances regarding minimum housing standards. State and local regulations require that the internal temperature of a rental home, place of residence, office or place of business be maintained to at least a minimum of 65 degrees Fahrenheit at all times.

If the heating facility cannot maintain the required temperature, the landlord or person in charge of the building must be notified that there is a problem with the heat and given an opportunity to correct the situation. For any reason that your place of residence or business has no heat for an extended period of time, please contact the Environmental Inspections Division at (203) 977-4363.

May the holiday season bring you comfort, joy and the best of times.

- Ron Miller, Interim Dir. of Environmental Inspections Division



World AIDS Day is celebrated on December 1st each year around the world. It has become one of the most recognized international health days and is a key opportunity to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on, & celebrate victories such as increased access to treatment and prevention services.

Each year on World AIDS Day, the Stamford HIV Prevention Program, Department of Health and Social Services coordinates collaborative initiatives that recognize the mission of this day. The Stop AIDS Mobile Theater, a statewide funded prevention project is invited to our community to perform in the high schools and middle schools of Stamford. Through the use of skits, the performers use knowledge and humor to get the message across that HIV is a preventable disease. This format of education keeps the youth audiences attentive, involved and no doubt wiser as they leave the performance.

For the past 14 years, HIV Prevention Program staff has worked with AIDS Interfaith Stamford, whose vision is to explore ways in which each religious community can touch the lives of those living with HIV/AIDS with prayers, love and affirmation. In addition, to share ways in which faith communities can mobilize, challenge, educate and advocate for a fuller and more compassionate response to AIDS.

This year was the fourteenth Annual World AIDS Day Interfaith Service, a service of remembrance, awareness, hope and healing. Through this service, we remembered those who have died and created hope and healing for those who are living with HIV, along with those families and friends affected by HIV. The service brought together the community to increase awareness that HIV and AIDS continues to have a devastating impact globally, nationally and right here in Stamford. The service was held at the First United Methodist Church.

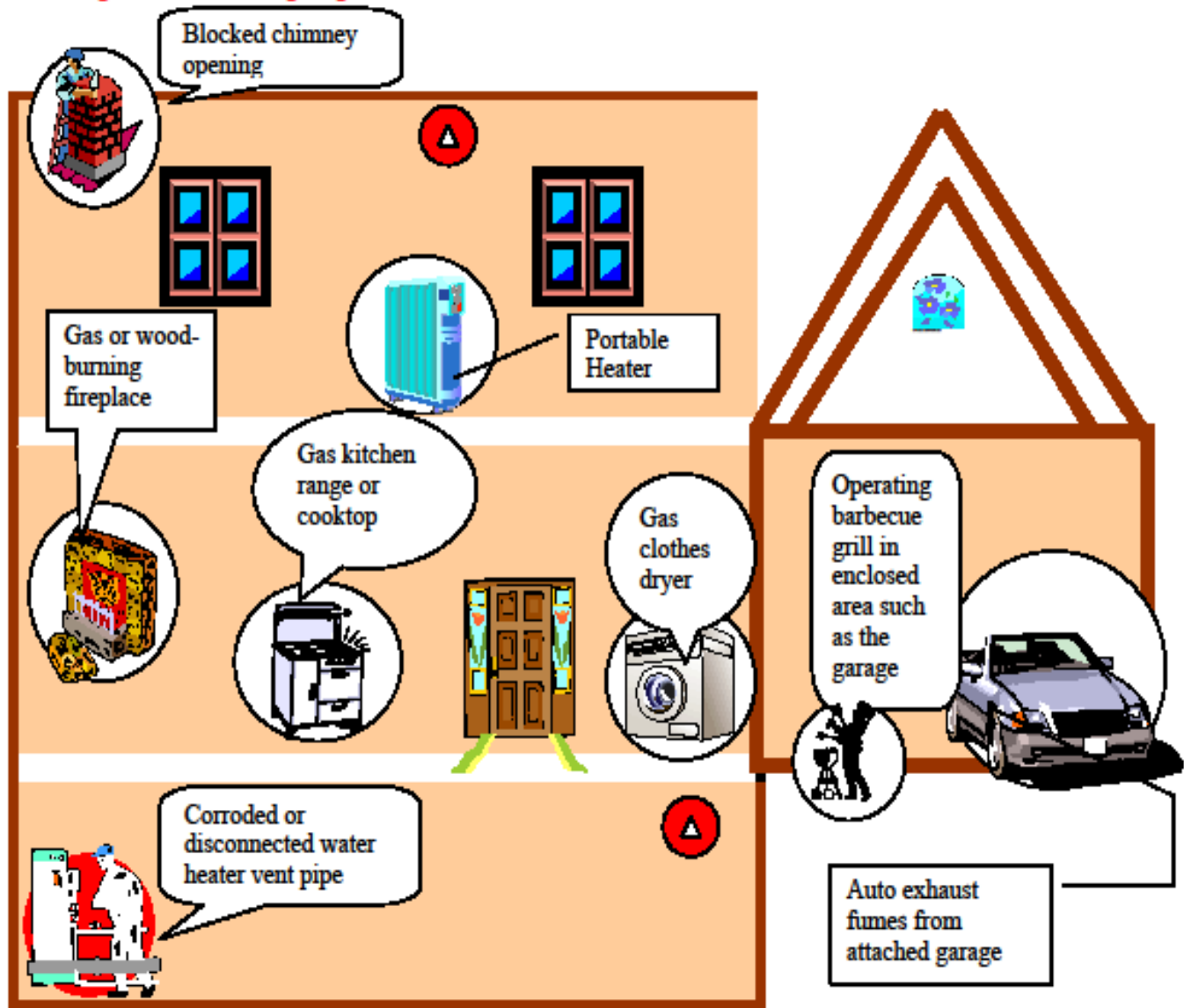
The Stamford HIV Prevention Program offers free and confidential HIV testing, using an oral 20 minute rapid test or a one week test. Call 203 977-4387 to schedule a time to come in.

- Debbie Katz, Dir., HIV Prevention Program

CITY OF STAMFORD

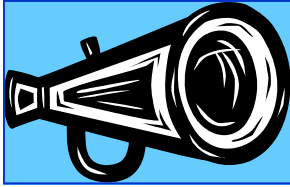
BREATH OF FRESH AIR PROGRAM

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless deadly gas. Since you cannot see, taste or smell it, carbon monoxide can kill you. It is produced by malfunctioning or unvented home appliances such as gas or oil furnaces, clothes dryer, range, ovens, water heaters, space heaters, fire places, charcoal grills and wood burning stoves. Fumes from automobiles also contain high levels of carbon monoxide that can enter a home through openings in walls or doorways if a car is left running in an attached garage.



Install one CO detector near the sleeping area. For added protection, install on every level. Detectors should be placed at least 15 feet from the furnace.

Choose the places in the home that are potential carbon monoxide sources. It is recommended that a Connecticut License Contractor check all fuel burning appliance furnaces, venting and chimney system at least once a year or as directed by the manufacturer of the item.



Updates & Announcements

FLU Shots!

Flu shots are still available through the Health Department. You can schedule an appointment for your flu shot by calling our nurses at 203.977.4371. It's not too late to protect your self from the flu.

Spread Some Holiday Cheer!

The Department of Health & Social Services is collecting new toys for area children in need. New hats, mittens, and gloves are welcome as well. Please drop off your donations on the 8th floor in the Health Department reception area, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30am and 4:00pm. We'll collect donations through December 16th.



Medicare Questions?

If you need help navigating the Medicare system or would like information on eligibility, volunteers from the MedAssist program are available to answer your questions. Please call to make an appointment. *Meetings are by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 203.977.5151.*

Holiday Spirit!

The Social Services Division would like to continue the tradition of collecting and giving gift cards to Stamford Seniors as a way of enlightening their spirits and making them aware that others do think of them and wish them well during the upcoming holiday season.

If you are able to contribute a gift card of any

monetary denomination, no matter how small, from a retail store, pharmacy, supermarket or any store of your choice, the effort would be deeply appreciated.

The deadline for dropping off the gift cards is Monday, December 19, 2011. You may give them to Victoria Mason or Sharona Cowan in the Social Services Division on the 9th Floor. Any questions, please contact Victoria Mason at 977-4872 or Sharona Cowan at 977-4051 or email

VMason@Ci.Stamford.Ct.Us, or
SCowan@Ci.Stamford.ct.Us

Connecticut Dental Health Partnership

If you are enrolled in HUSKY A, HUSKY B. or Medicaid (Title 19) then the CTDHP can help you access the dental care you need. Call to locate a dentist, get assistance with appointment scheduling, and transportation coordination (available only to HUSKY A and Title 19. 1-866-420-2924, Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Renter's Rebate Update

The deadline to file for a medical extension is Thursday, December 15, 2011. If you or anyone you know has applied for a Renter's Rebate and have not received a check, please contact Victoria Mason at 203-977-4872 ASAP. Please be sure to state your name, telephone number and address when calling.

If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter or have suggestions for upcoming issues, please contact Kerri Hagan, Public Health Educator, at 203-977-4893 or at khagan@ci.stamford.ct.us.