

# Just for the Health of It

Warren County Public Health Newsletter December 2022

## Drunk Driving

This Thanksgiving holiday, the Warren County Sheriff's Office and law enforcement across Warren County are teaming up with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to make sure you make it to the Thanksgiving table. With the Thanksgiving holiday kicking off a celebratory time of year, it's essential to take some time to remember that *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

If your plans to celebrate include alcohol, arrange for a sober driver.

Drunken driving-related crashes spike during the Thanksgiving holiday season. According to NHTSA, 185 people were killed during the 2020 Thanksgiving period (6 p.m. Wednesday, November 25 through 5:59 a.m. Monday, November 30). Tragically, from 2016-2020, 821 people died in alcohol-impaired crashes during the Thanksgiving holiday period.



Warren County  
Public Health

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## Health Events

Watch out for our new episodes on the Just for the Health of It podcast! We will be interviewing the Director of the Ryan White Program at Hudson Headwaters as we talk about World HIV/AIDS Day! You can also expect our public health educators at multiple events this year including some at SUNY Adirondack! Make sure to stop by and say hello as we educate the public on current public health topics!



# World HIV/AIDS Day

*HIV is a virus that can lead to the condition AIDS. It is important to protect yourself from HIV through these quick tips and tricks. Read on about the impact of HIV, how an HIV diagnosis has changed and the resources available to you in Warren County.*

World HIV/AIDS Day is on the 1st of December every year. This day is meant to remember those that we have lost due to HIV/AIDS and to remember that even though a diagnosis of HIV may have been a scary diagnosis in the 80s and 90s, it is not nearly as scary as it once was. However, that does not play down the importance of protecting yourself from HIV/AIDS. Read on to learn more about HIV/AIDS, how it is spread and detected, as well as how to protect yourself or treatment options that are available to you.

## Difference of HIV/AIDS

Often clumped together, HIV and AIDS are actually two separate things. HIV is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and does not always lead to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). It is best to think of the two in this way; HIV is the virus and the cause. A person can be diagnosed with HIV but not with AIDS. On the other hand, AIDS can only result from having HIV. AIDS is the condition, and HIV is the virus.

## Transmission

The transmission of HIV can be through many things but mainly is through sexual contact. Often thought of as only resulting from male-male sex, it can actually be transmitted through male-female sex as well. The transmission of HIV can also be from injectable drug use as well as from mother-to-child but is not as common anymore. In 2020, male-male sex accounted for 70% of HIV diagnosis, female-male sex accounted for 22% of HIV diagnoses, and injectable drug use accounted for 7% of HIV diagnoses. In total, there were nearly 25,000 HIV diagnoses across the nation.

## Prevention

There are many ways to prevent yourself from HIV and a large portion of it is practicing proper sexual health habits. This means things such as abstinence, proper condom usage, and staying away from drugs.



The easiest way to prevent yourself from getting HIV, is to never put yourself in a position to get HIV. This means practicing abstinence and staying away from injectable drugs. If you don't want to get HIV, then it is easiest to never be in a position that puts you at risk for an HIV diagnosis. There are more ways than just abstinence however, with proper condom usage. Condoms are not only for men, they can be used by women as well. There are both female and male condoms. Female condoms work the same as male condoms except they go inside of the vagina as opposed to over the penis.

## Testing

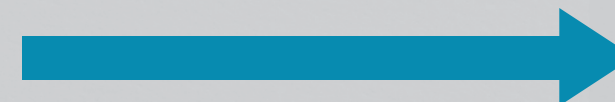
Testing for HIV can be done in one of two ways. There is a rapid test with a 99% accuracy that can be done in 15 minutes; or there is a laboratory test that can typically take a few days to hear back from. Both of these tests are blood tests and require either a finger prick or a blood draw.

## Treatment

Treatment for HIV can be done with PrEP and PEP. These can be taken in either a pill form or an injectable treatment. The pill is taken for 27 days, everyday. This is not a cure for HIV, but it will reduce your viral load and reduce what is called "opportunistic infections". HIV is a blood disorder that affects your body's ability to defend itself. Using the treatment however, will allow your immune system to get the virus under control and reduce your risk of these opportunistic infections.

For more resources and information, visit the Ryan White Program website on the Hudson Headwaters Health Network website!

You can find the website at [hhhn.org](http://hhhn.org) and going to the services tab or you can click...



**HERE**



# Winter Safety

*As folks begin to travel for the holidays on icy roads and in snowy conditions, it's important to make sure you are safe this winter. Whether you think you are a good driver or not, these tips can help keep you and your loved ones safe this winter.*

From late November to mid-January, when families gather, parties are scheduled and travel spikes, safety should be top of mind. Following is tried-and-true advice to ensure your family remains safe and injury-free throughout the season.

## **Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared**

If you're traveling this year, be sure your vehicle is in good running condition, get plenty of rest and be prepared for any emergency. Traveling by car during the holidays has the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation based on fatalities per passenger mile. Hundreds of people die every year in crashes on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, according to Injury Facts. Alcohol impairment is involved in about a third of these fatalities.

Stay safe on the roads over the holidays — and every day:

- Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency kit with you
- Get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid drowsy driving
- Leave early, planning ahead for heavy traffic
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled
- Put that cell phone away; many distractions occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit
- Practice defensive driving
- Designate a sober driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol or over-the-counter, prescription and illegal drugs can cause impairment

## **Decorate Safely**

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency rooms see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season.

When decorating follow these tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Keep potentially poisonous plants – mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis – away from children
- If using an artificial tree, check that it is labeled "fire resistant"
- If using a live tree, cut off about 2 inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption, remember to water it and remove it from your home when it is dry
- Place your tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources, making certain not to block doorways
- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower tree branches where small children can reach them
- Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors, and choose the right ladder for the task when hanging lights
- Replace light sets that have broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections
- Follow the package directions on the number of light sets that can be plugged into one socket
- Never nail, tack or stress wiring when hanging lights and keep plugs off the ground away from puddles and snow
- Turn off all lights and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house



# Winter Safety Continued

*There is always a lot of safety that comes with Winter which is why we have two pages! This page covers fire safety, food poisoning and how to give gifts that are appropriate for the recipients age*

## **Candles and Fireplaces**

Use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations in many homes during the holidays, means more risk for fire. The National Fire Protection Association reports that one-third of home decoration fires are started by candles and two of every five decoration fires happen because the decorations are placed too close to a heat source.

- Place candles where they cannot be knocked down or blown over and out of reach of children
- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace
- Never leave candles or fireplaces burning unattended or when you are asleep
- Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year

## **Turkey Fryers**

Be alert to the dangers if you're thinking of celebrating the holidays by frying a turkey. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports there have been hundreds turkey-fryer related fires, burns or other injuries, and millions of dollars in property damage losses from these incidents.

NSC discourages the use of turkey fryers at home and urges those who prefer fried turkey to seek out professional establishments or consider using an oil-less turkey fryer. If you must fry your own turkey, follow all U.S. Fire Administration turkey fryer guidelines.

## **Food Poisoning Is No Joke**

Keep your holidays happy by handling food safely. The [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) website from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides some valuable holiday food safety tips:

- Wash your hands frequently when handling food
- Keep raw meat away from fresh produce
- Use separate cutting boards, plate and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature

## **It's Better to Give Safely**

Gifts and toys should inspire joy, not cause injuries. Thousands of children are seriously injured in toy-related incidents every year. Avoid safety hazards while gifting with these tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Toys are age-rated for safety, not for children's intellect and physical ability, so be sure to choose toys in the correct age range
- Choose toys for children under 3 that do not have small parts which could be choking hazards
- For children under 10, avoid toys that must be plugged into an electrical outlet
- Be cautious about toys that have button batteries or magnets, which can be harmful or fatal if swallowed



# Mental Health

*We understand these past two years have been tough and with the winter months around the corner, it can feel like no one is there for you. Listed below are resources and information on how to stay mentally healthy this winter and how to cope with hard times.*

It's that time of year again. The sun is setting early. The weather is getting colder and colder. And with the Covid-19 pandemic, we're spending even more time indoors, away from our family and friends. These winter months can take a toll on your physical and mental well-being. You may find yourself feeling more irritable, having low energy, or even struggling to do day to day routines. Maintaining your mental health through these winter months is important in supporting your overall health, safety and wellness. These tips can help you beat the winter blues and manage those negative feelings.

## **Get outside and exercise**

Regular exercise is good for your body and mind. Even getting just 15 minutes of moderate exercise a day can boost your energy, help you sleep better and improve your mood. The cold weather doesn't mean you are stuck inside. Get creative with ways to stay fit during the winter. Bundle up and go outside to take a walk and get some fresh air and necessary Vitamin D. Exercise will reduce stress and help you relax, and spending time in daylight, even in winter, will benefit your mood.

## **Keep up healthy eating and sleep habits**

Eating a healthy, nutritious diet is a core component of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Diets high in processed foods and refined sugar have been connected to worsening mood disorders, including depression. It may be challenging with all those leftover holiday foods and desserts, but focus on maintaining balance - fill up on healthy fruits, vegetables, and proteins, but allow yourself the occasional indulgence.

Getting a good night's sleep is just as vital. While too much sugar can worsen your mood, so can too little sleep. Lack of sleep has been associated with an increased risk of depression and other mental health effects. And a healthy amount of sleep can improve your mental and emotional resilience. Have a support system and stay connected

## **Keep up with your other appointments**

Taking care of your mental health includes taking care of your overall health. Don't neglect your physical health. Keep up with your regular dental visits, primary care visits, and any other ongoing wellness appointments. Many practices are still offering telehealth appointments when possible. So you can still take care of your physical health without needing to go out in the cold!

## **Meditate and be mindful**

Meditation and mindfulness has been shown to improve symptoms of depression and anxiety. Try practicing meditation for even just ten minutes a day. Meditating in the morning or before bed can help you start the day on a calm note or clear your mind of the stresses of the day. If you are new to meditation or find it difficult to quiet your mind, try some guided meditation videos, apps, or podcasts. Meditation also doesn't need to be a formal practice. Other activities such as yoga, listening to your favorite song, or taking a quiet walk - even in the cold weather - can help you be mindful and check in with your body and mind.

## **When to seek medical attention**

The winter months may have you feeling more isolated, unmotivated, or stressed. While these tips can help you manage your mental health through these months, it's possible your feelings may be indicative of a more serious disorder. It's important to call your doctor if you experience signs such as:

- Feeling depressed most of the day
- Decreased interest or pleasure in activities that you used to enjoy
- Changes in weight and appetite
- Feeling worthless, hopeless, or excessively guilty
- Difficulty concentrating more than usual
- Experiencing strong mood swings
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or harming others

Taking care of your mental health is a year-round practice. The winter doesn't mean you're stuck indoors and it certainly doesn't mean you can't do the things you enjoyed in the warmer months. While you may need to be a little more creative, you can certainly still connect with others, enjoy outside activities, and get that social interaction we all need to stay mentally healthy and happy. With these practices and healthy habits, it's possible to see the sunnier side of winter.



# New Years Resolutions and Food Safety

*With New Years around the corner, make sure to set realistic goals for yourself and if that involves eating healthy, make sure to prepare your food correctly. Follow our guidelines and see which of these resolutions you're going to take part in this New Years!*

## **New Year's Resolution you will Want to Keep**

It's that time of the year again – to look back on the past 12 months and see how far we have come and what can we do for the next 12. Need some inspiration for your New Year's Resolution? To help become healthier and happier in 2023, here are some ideas that you will actually be **“able to keep”**.

**Take a walk everyday:** “Exercise more” is one of the New Year Resolution for everyone. Walking is free and you can listen to music or podcasts or walk with a friend. It will help you feel refreshed and enhance your creativity.

**Take a Daily Tech Break:** technology overload can cause depression, isolation, lack of social skills, compulsive shopping and poor health. Take a digital detox break by setting aside one or more hours a day to unplug. You will sleep, eat and feel better.

**Cut your alcohol consumption and quit smoking:** Reducing or eliminating alcohol can have positive health effects, decide what occasions are the most important to you so you can plan ahead and drink mindfully. Inhaling anything other than air can be damaging to your lungs. Quitting smoking has great rewards for your mind, body and wallet.

**Eat Right:** load up on whole grains like whole grain pasta, whole grain bread; fruits and vegetables. Cut back on refined grains and simple sugars. Cut down on sodium (salt). Limit meat, whole fat dairy products to reduce cholesterol and saturated fats

**Reduce Stress:** Find what makes you tense, and try to change what you can by talking your problems and worries with someone you can trust- like a friend or family member. Exercise to burn off stress. Learn relaxation techniques such as meditation. Talk to your doctor if you need more help.

## **HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY**

No matter what's on the menu, food is always a central part of holiday festivities. Food safety is the most important ingredient in preparing food for the holidays.

### **Proper Prepping:**

Make sure your fridge is set at or **below 40 ° F**. Chill perishable groceries within two hours of shopping.

Store raw meats in a container or dish to prevent juices from leaking and set below ready-to-eat foods.

Wash your hand for **20 SECONDS** with warm water and soap.

Be sure to separate raw meat from ready-to-eat foods and dishes.

**DON'T FORGET** – you need two thermometers.

One for the fridge to ensure food is stored at **40 ° F**

One for food, particularly meat, to ensure its cooked to the right temperature.

### **Hitting the Road:**

If you are bringing a dish to a get-together with coworkers, family or friends this holiday season, make sure you are transporting food safely.

#### **KEEP COLD FOOD COLD**

When transporting cold dishes, place items in a cooler with ice or gel packs to keep food at or below **40 ° F**

#### **KEEP HOT FOOD HOT**

Keep hot foods at or above **140 ° F** by wrapping dishes in insulation bags or towels and newspaper

Perishable food kept in the Danger Zone (between **40 ° F- 140 ° F**) for longer than **2 hours** should be thrown out.



# Holiday Swaps

As the holidays approach, parties become numerous along with platters of rich and delicious seasonal foods. If you are hosting a gathering this holiday season or are a guest at a dinner party, and want to lighten up your offerings without sacrificing taste, you have plenty of options:

## **Instead of Full-Fat Dips, try a Yogurt Dip**

1 oz. of sour cream – 60 Cals. v/s 1 oz. Greek yogurt – 20 Cals. Greek or fat free yogurt has more protein and good bacteria. Enhance the flavor by adding fresh herbs, garlic or a drizzle of olive oil.

## **Cut back on butter or margarine**

Try low- sodium vegetable broth in mashed potatoes to add flavor and reduce fat intake

## **Ditch Iceberg Lettuce in favor of Tastier Alternatives**

To add crunch, taste, fiber and vitamins; use kale, spinach, arugula or mustard greens.

## **Alcohol swap**

Satisfy your thirst with water first. If you are of legal age and choose to drink, moderate alcohol consumption is defined as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks for men.

## **Put on your dancing or walking shoes**

Dancing is a great way to work off some holiday calories. If you are at a family gathering, suggest a walk before the feast or even between dinner and dessert.

## **Pay attention to what really matters**

Although food is an integral part of the holidays, put the focus on family and friends, laughter and cheer. If balance and moderation are your usual guides, it's okay to indulge or overeat once in a while.