



## Health and Wellness Spring Newsletter May 2022



### Healthy Choices Count

5-2-1-0 is a national campaign to encourage healthy habits. It focuses on 4 habits that promote health at any age:

- Eat 5 servings of fruit/vegetables a day.
- Limit recreational screen time to 2 hours a day.
- Be physically active for at least 1 hour a day.
- Drink 0 sugary drinks.

There will be a health fair at NHS on May 25 to introduce the “5-2-1-0: Healthy Choices Count” message, with a plan to spread the message to all district schools in the months to come.

The Healthy Choices Count message aligns with a town-wide “Know Your Numbers” initiative that encourages all Newtowners to take charge of their own health.

*“The best investment you will ever make is in your own health!”*

### May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

MHA, Mental Health America, encourages everyone to get back to basics to address the growing numbers of young people facing mental health challenges. An important first step is to remove the stigma surrounding mental illness and to recognize that a large percentage of the population suffers from mental health issues at some point in their life. Let your children know that they can talk to you about their mental health and know when and where to get help. Your pediatrician or primary care provider is often a good place to start. In Newtown, the Center for Support and Wellness can assist with referrals when needed: [Newtown Center for Support & Wellness](#)



At school, counselors, psychologists, social workers and school nurses, although they cannot treat mental illness, can be a support in helping to sort out emotional and mental health problems that are impacting a student. Contact info for social emotional school support personnel can be found here: [Social Emotional Health Supports](#)

## “Mention Prevention”

May is a favorite month for designated health topics. “Mental Health Awareness” month,” “Prevention Week”, “Screen Free Day” along with dozens of others are all celebrated in May. Here are two important prevention topics for parents to be aware of.

### “Don’t Be a Juul Fool”



The number of children who use vaping products has skyrocketed in recent years, due in part to aggressive marketing of vaping products to kids. Many students and adults are under the impression that vaping is relatively safe because they believe that “it is only water vapor”. In fact all vaping products contain solvents, flavorings and sweeteners. Many vape products also contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance. E-cigarettes are also commonly used to deliver marijuana based products. What is known is that, at a minimum, e-cigarettes contain lung irritating substances that can cause mild to serious respiratory problems. What is frightening is that the long term effect of inhaling these unregulated substances is unknown. Parental attitudes and knowledge are key factors in protecting children from vaping. A town wide “Don’t Be a Juul Fool” anti-vaping campaign is being sponsored this spring by the Newtown Prevention Council.

For more information on vaping:  
[Vaping: a Huge Uncontrolled Experiment](#)



### *Talk, they hear you!*

It may seem to you that your children never listen to you, but teens really do hear you. Over 80% of young people aged 10 - 18 say that their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink or not. Start talking early and make use of teachable moments. 10% of twelve year olds say that they have tried alcohol. The number jumps to 50% by age fifteen.

#### Here are five conversation goals suggested by SAMSHA:

- Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse.
- Show you care about your teen’s health, wellness and success.
- Show you are a good source of information about alcohol & drugs.
- Show you are paying attention & will discourage risky behaviors.
- Build your teen’s skills/strategies for avoiding drinking & drug use.



# Summer in Newtown

If you are looking for fun this summer, Newtown is a great place to be.

- **SWIMMING**

- Treadwell Pool

- Eichler's Cove Beach

- NCC: lap pool, therapeutic pool and splash pool

- **KIDS SUMMER PROGRAMS**

- [-Newtown Parks and Rec Summer Programs](#)

- [-Continuing Ed: Summer Camps & Program \(including S.M.A.R.T Camp\)](#)

- [-NCC: Summer Camp](#)

- [-NYA: "Play +"](#)

- **TRY SOMETHING NEW**

- Try **Pickleball**. It's easy and fun for the whole family. It's like playing ping pong on a court. Newtown now has Pickleball courts at Treadwell and Dickinson Parks as well as at Fairfield Hills.

- Visit **Sticks and Stones Farm** for great hiking trails and unique programming: [Sticks and Stones Farm](#).

- Walk up to the highest point in Newtown, the top of Holcomb Hill, to enjoy a 360 degree view of surrounding towns. Newtown Forest Association offers various events for all ages: [Newtown Forest Association](#)

## **FREE FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

- **Bring a picnic and enjoy free concerts at Dickinson Park:**

- Tuesdays- kids concerts

- Thursdays - family concerts

- **Free kids movies at Edmond Town Hall** sponsored by Ingersoll. May 20-22 Sonic the Hedgehog 2 (watch for future listings).

- **Hike on dozens of great trails** right in Newtown, from paved paths to wooded trails along beautiful streams and waterfalls: [Best Trails in Newtown](#)

- Try **biking on one of the local rail trails:** Wolfe Park in Monroe; Housatonic Rail Trail; Farmington Rail Trail. Rail trails are fairly flat and easy biking. [Connecticut Bike Trails](#)

- Visit the library. It's a great destination on a hot summer day with something for every member of the family: [C.H. Booth Library](#)

***Have fun! It's good for your body and soul.***