

TORRINGTON AREA HEALTH DISTRICT

350 Main Street, Suite A Torrington, CT 06790
Phone (860) 489-0436 Fax (860) 496-8243

Providing local public health services for the Borough of Bantam, Bethlehem, Canaan, Cornwall, Goshen, Harwinton, Kent, Borough of Litchfield, Litchfield, Middlebury, Morris, Norfolk, North Canaan, Plymouth, Salisbury, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Watertown & Winsted.

January 2024 Newsletter



Test Your Home. Protect Your Health.

JANUARY IS NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

Protect Yourself and Your Family from Radon

Radon is an odorless and invisible radioactive gas naturally released from rocks, soil, and water. In outdoor environments, radon levels are very low and generally not considered harmful.

Radon can get into homes or buildings through small cracks or holes and build up to higher levels. Over time, breathing in high radon levels can cause lung cancer.

The good news is that lung cancer from radon is preventable.



Testing your home is the only way to know if radon levels are high. You and your family could be at risk for lung cancer from radon.



Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 8:00am to 4:00pm.
Wednesday: 8:00am to 6:00pm, Friday: 8:00am to 1:00pm.
Follow us on social media and www.tahtd.org



When to Test Your Home

You should test your home's radon levels

- If it's never been tested or radon levels are unknown
 - When preparing to buy or sell
 - Before and after any renovations, especially after making any repairs to reduce radon levels
- Before making any lifestyle changes in the home that would cause someone to spend more time in the basement or lower level (like converting a basement to a bedroom)

Ways to Test Your Home

Contact your [state radon office](#) for specific information and resources in your area for testing and for a list of qualified radon testers. You can either hire a radon tester or purchase a radon test kit from a hardware store and do it yourself. However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends hiring a qualified tester if you are buying or selling your home.

There are two general types of radon test kits:

- Short-term kits measure radon for 2–90 days for quick results.
- Long-term kits measure radon in your home for over 90 days and are more likely to tell you your home's year-round average level. The longer the test, the better the results will reflect your home and lifestyle.

Do It Yourself Test Kits

Your [state radon office](#) can give you information on where to get a test kit and whether your state offers free or discounted test kits. You can purchase a radon test kit online, in many retail or hardware stores, or order one through the [National Radon Program Services](#).*

Once you have your kit:

- Follow all instructions carefully. This will include placing a small measuring device in your basement or the lowest level of your home, raised three feet off the ground, in the middle of the room.
- If your home is in a multi-unit building, you can test your unit by placing the device in the lowest level within your unit.
- Leave it there for the amount of time instructed. Short-term testing can take 2–90 days and long-term testing takes more than 90 days. The exact length of time for testing depends on the specific test.
- Once the test is completed, follow the directions on the test kit packaging to find out where to send the device to get the results.

*The National Radon Program Services is maintained by Kansas State University through a Cooperative Agreement with EPA.

Understanding Results

Radon is measured in units of picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. Radon is naturally found in outdoor air at very low levels and some radon will always be in your indoor air. According to EPA, the average radon level in American homes is about 1.3 pCi/L.

EPA recommends [contacting a licensed professional](#) to install a radon reduction system if your radon level is at or above 4 pCi/L of air. EPA also recommends [taking action to reduce radon](#) if your radon level is from 2 pCi/L through 4 pCi/L. There is no known safe level of radon so you should always aim to have the lowest radon levels to reduce the risk of lung cancer.

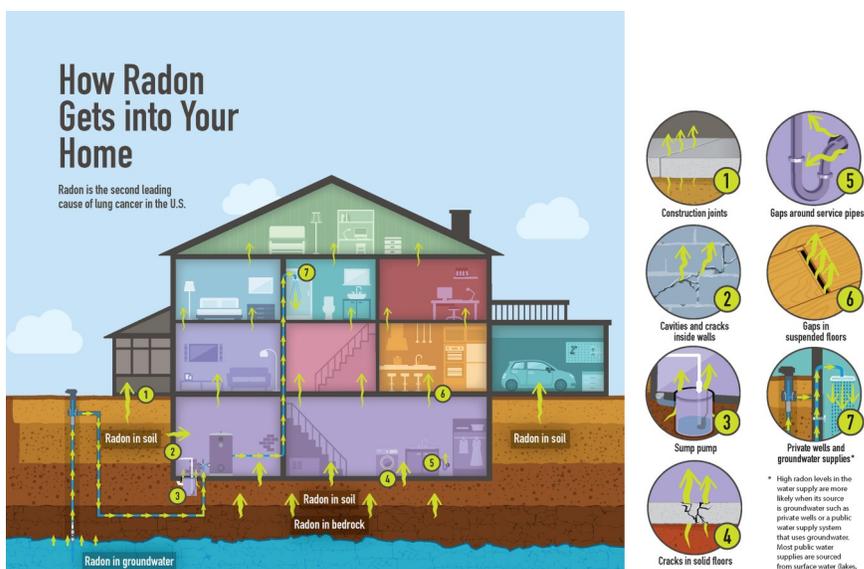
Test Results and Next Steps

What to Do if Your Test Shows Higher Radon Levels	
Radon Level	What You Should Do
Higher than 4 pCi/L	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you used a short-term test: Take a second test using either a short-term or long-term test. If you use a second short-term test, calculate the average of the two results.• Contact a licensed professional to install a radon reduction system if:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ The average of two short term tests is ≥ 4 pCi/L, or◦ Results from any long-term test are also ≥ 4 pCi/L.• Make sure you retest a few months after your home is fixed to see if a radon levels were reduced.
Between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider installing a radon reduction system.• Make sure you retest a few months after your home is fixed to see if radon levels were reduced.
Lower than 2 pCi/L	No action needed. Test your home again if you start living on a lower level (for example, if you turn your basement into a home office or extra bedroom).

Get the Facts on Radon

Radon in Homes and Buildings

All outdoor and indoor air has some radon in it. Some [building materials](#) also can release low levels of radon. **Radon can build up in the air in any home or building** whether it has a basement, is sealed or drafty, or is new or old. There is no known safe level of radon and you should always aim to have the lowest level. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends fixing your home if radon levels are above 4 [picoCuries](#) per liter of air (pCi/L).



Test your home

Make repairs

Learn more: www.cdc.gov/radon/index.html

LUNG CANCER RISK

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking. The EPA and the Surgeon General's office estimate radon is responsible for more than 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the United States.

When you breathe in radon, radioactive particles from the decay of radon gas can get trapped in your lungs. It takes many years for lung cancer to develop. Most people don't have symptoms until lung cancer is advanced and at that point it is harder to treat. For these reasons, it is important to take steps to reduce radon exposure throughout your life to help prevent lung cancer.

Factors that increase your risk of getting lung cancer from radon include the following:

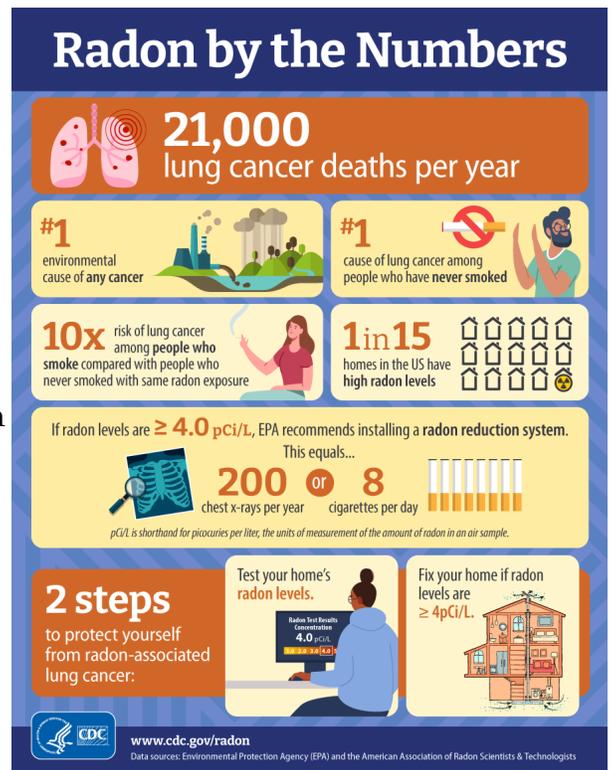
- High radon levels in your home or another building that you regularly spend time in
- High radon levels in the part of the home or building where you spend the most time (Radon levels are often higher in basements and lower levels.)
- Smoking cigarettes, currently or in the past
- Burning wood, coal, or other substances that add particles to air

There is not enough data to show whether children have a higher risk of developing lung cancer from radon exposure than adults. However, children may have higher doses (amount breathed in) of radon than adults even when exposed to the same radon levels for the same amount of time. This is because children have different lung shapes and sizes and faster breathing rates.

What you can do:

Steps you can take to measure and reduce radon levels include the following:

Purchasing a Radon Test Kit	Testing Your Home or Office	Sending the Kit to An Approved Laboratory to Determine Radon Levels	Fixing Your Home If Radon Levels Are High
			



The only way to know if you have unsafe levels of radon in your home or office is by [testing](#). You can contact your [state radon office](#) for testing or purchase a test kit in a hardware store or online. If your test shows that radon levels are above 4pCi/L or you are interested in reducing radon in your home, contact your state radon office to help you find a qualified or state-certified radon contractor in your area to [fix your home](#). Lowering high radon levels requires technical knowledge and special skills so you should rely only on a qualified professional for these repairs. Test radon levels again after any repairs to be sure they worked.

Since there is no safe level of radon, reducing radon inside your home or building will always help reduce your risk of lung cancer, even when the level in your home is less than 4 pCi/L.

The [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) recommends these actions you can take to reduce your risks of lung cancer and help lower radon levels in your home:

- Increase air flow in your house by opening windows and using fans and vents to circulate air. However, natural ventilation in any type of house is only a temporary strategy to reduce radon.
- Seal cracks in floors and walls with plaster, caulk, or other materials designed for this purpose.
- You can cover the earth floor in crawl spaces with a high-density plastic sheet. A vent pipe and fan can be used to blow the radon from under the sheet and vent it to the outdoors
- Always test radon levels again after you've made any of these changes to ensure these actions reduced the radon levels.

Smoking and second-hand smoke, combined with exposures to high radon levels, increase your risk of lung cancer. Not smoking and not allowing others to smoke in your house also helps prevent lung cancer. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit [CDC.gov/quit](https://www.cdc.gov/quit) for free support and resources to help you quit smoking.

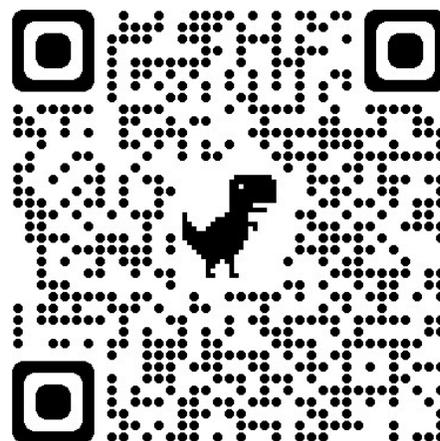
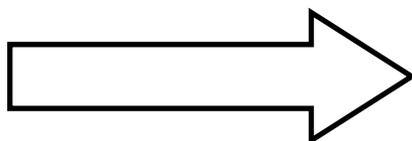
BUYING A NEW HOME

Ask about [radon-resistant construction techniques](#) if you are buying a new home. It is almost always cheaper and easier to build these features into new homes than to add them later.

Workplaces, Schools, and Other Buildings

EPA provides guidance and resources for [reducing radon in schools](#). Contact your [state radon office](#) for information about testing and reduction strategies in schools, daycare and childcare facilities, and workplaces in your area.

Radon Testing



Folic Acid: The Best Tool to Prevent Neural Tube Defects

Learn how to get healthy before and during early pregnancy to increase your chance of having a healthy baby. Plan ahead by getting 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid daily.

CDC celebrates 30 years of folic acid's power to prevent neural tube defects. For three decades, the US Public Health Service has recommended that all people capable of becoming pregnant consume 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid daily to prevent neural tube defects (NTDs). Folic acid is an important part of planning for a healthy pregnancy. The two most common types of neural tube defects are anencephaly and spina bifida. Anencephaly is a serious birth defect in which parts of a baby's brain and skull do not form correctly. Almost all babies born with anencephaly will die shortly after birth. Spina bifida is a serious birth defect in which a baby's spine does not form correctly and can result in some severe physical disabilities. All people who are capable of becoming pregnant should get 400 mcg of folic acid every day.



DO I NEED FOLIC ACID?

Yes! Anyone who can become pregnant should get 400 mcg of folic acid daily, in addition to eating foods with folate from a varied diet, even if they do not plan on becoming pregnant. Our bodies use folic acid to make new cells like skin, hair, and nails. Start a healthy habit today by getting 400 mcg of folic acid every day.

Why should I start taking folic acid now?

All people who are capable of becoming pregnant should get 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

Neural tube defects (like anencephaly and spina bifida) happen in the first few weeks of pregnancy, often before a person finds out they are pregnant. Also, almost half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended. This is why it is important for all people who can become pregnant to get 400 mcg of folic acid every day, even if they are not planning a pregnancy. By the time a person realizes they are pregnant, it might be too late to prevent these birth defects. Plan ahead! Starting today is the best option.

HOW DO I GET FOLIC ACID?

An easy way to be sure you're getting enough folic acid is to **take a daily vitamin with 400 mcg of folic acid in it** (most vitamins contain the recommended daily amount of 400 mcg of folic acid). If taking a vitamin upsets your stomach, try taking it with food or just before bed. If you have trouble taking pills, try a chewable vitamin. Also, be sure to take it with a full glass of water.



Folic acid is added to foods such as enriched breads, pastas, rice, cereals, and some corn masa flour. Corn masa flour is used to make foods such as corn chips, tortillas, tamales, and taco shells. Check the nutrition label on the food packaging to see if it has folic acid.

You can also **eat a diet rich in folate**. Folate can be found in foods like beans, peas, and lentils; oranges and orange juice; asparagus and broccoli; and dark leafy green vegetables such as spinach and mustard greens. But it can be hard for most women to get the recommended daily amount of folate through food alone.

Taking a supplement with more than 400 mcg of folic acid each day is not necessarily better for preventing a neural tube defect. Only do so if a doctor recommends taking more per day due to other health conditions.

RESOURCES FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

CDC has English- and Spanish-language folic acid educational materials for healthcare professionals that can be downloaded or ordered for free. Visit our [folic acid partner toolkit](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/features/folic-acid-helps-prevent-some-birth-defects.html) today to get your educational materials!

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/features/folic-acid-helps-prevent-some-birth-defects.html>

SOMETHING YUMMY



Chia Pudding

Chia seed pudding is a super-tasty and extremely easy way to sneak healthy fats into your diet. Chia seeds are filled with omega-3 fatty acids — the good fats that promote heart and joint health and aid memory.

Ingredients:

½ cup of almond milk

2 tablespoons chia seeds (whole not ground)

In a small bowl, combine your chia seeds and milk. Mix well. Set in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours, but it is best to leave it overnight.

When you are ready to eat, give a quick stir. Enjoy as-is or add any toppings you like, nuts berries, dry fruit.

Nutrition Information:

2 Tbsp. chia seeds (28g) with ½ cup unsweetened almond milk

Calories 152

Fat 10g

Protein 5g

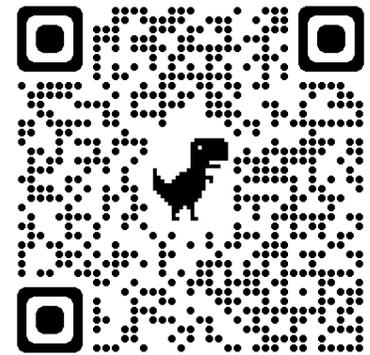
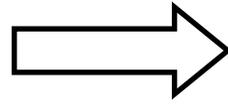
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<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-make-chia-pudding>

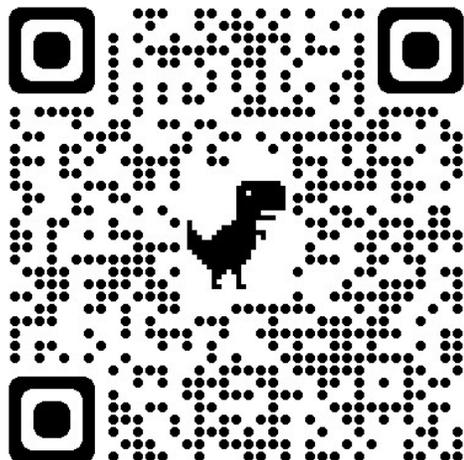
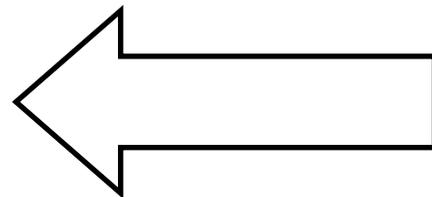
It's Your Best Shot!



The CT WiZ Public Portal allows individuals who were vaccinated in Connecticut to access their own immunization records, while parents and guardians can also access their child's records. You have the option of getting a PDF copy of your full immunization record, or your COVID-19 vaccine record that contains your SMART Health card, which is a digital copy of your COVID-19 vaccine record that can be stored on your phone as a QR code. (Note: CT DPH does not issue replacement 'CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Cards' to the public.)



What to join the Litchfield County Opiate Task Force?



COMMUNITY UPDATES

WARNING: Recalled Cinnamon Apple Fruit Puree and Applesauce(s)



Consumers Are Advised To:

- Immediately stop using these products.
- Return it to the purchase place for a full refund or discard them.
- Contact their pediatrician to have their child's lead level tested.

For additional questions about specific products, consumers are encouraged to contact the companies:

WanaBana at support@wanabanafruits.com

Schnucks Customer Care team at 314-994-4400 or 1-800-264-4400

Weis Customer Service number at 866-999-9347

COMMUNITY UPDATES



American
Heart
Association.

Torrington Area Health District

HEARTSAVER AND BLS CPR TRAINING

*Learn the skills to
save a life*

Session Pricing:

Heartsaver program:
\$105.00

Recommended for anyone
with little or no medical
training who needs a course
completion card for job,
regulatory, or other
requirements.

BLS Course: \$95.00
Recommended for healthcare
professionals

Classes held at 350 Main
Street Torrington, CT 06790

Training includes:

- Identifying and responding to the signs of a cardiac arrest
- How to provide rescue breaths
- How to give high-quality CPR
- How to use an AED
- Practicing crisis management skills
- How to effectively work as a team during a cardiac arrest

Participants will receive a provider
electronic card valid for two years
upon successful completion of the
course

TO SCHEDULE FOR A CLASS, PLEASE CALL 860-489-0436 X322
GROUP CLASSES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
WE ACCEPT CHECKS AND CREDIT CARDS FOR PAYMENT

COMMUNITY UPDATES



START HERE

for community health



Monday, January 8, 2024

***** 3 – 7 pm *****

Our CareVan Clinics Offer the Following Services:

Address Various Urgent Needs (not limited to):

- Common cold/flu
- Stomach aches
- Ear aches/infections and foreign body removal
- Abscess incision and drainage
- Minor burns, lacerations, sprains and small fractures
- Rashes and insect bites
- Corneal abrasions
- Family planning

Medical Screenings:

- Blood pressure, Blood sugar, Urinalysis, Urine pregnancy

Lab Tests:

- A1C, Cholesterol, Hepatitis C, Hemoglobin, HIV, Flu, Symptomatic COVID-19, Complete Metabolic Panel (Electrolytes, Liver and Kidney function)

Referrals and Follow-up Care:

- Social Services, Behavioral Health, Primary Care and Specialists

Immunizations:

- Tetanus (Tdap), Pneumonia, Shingles, Hepatitis B, Meningitis, Gardasil (HPV), Polio, MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), Flu (Seasonal)
- COVID-19 Pfizer Bivalent Vaccine (Ages 12+)

WALK-INS WELCOME

-Open to all ages. Insurance accepted but not required.

-Face masks required and provided if needed.

**New Opportunities
62 Commercial Boulevard
Torrington, CT 06790**

Hartford
HealthCare
Neighborhood Health

COMMUNITY UPDATES

STOP AN OVERDOSE WITH NALOXONE



For Naloxone distribution map locator scan QR code above or visit <https://www.lcotf.org/harm-reduction/>

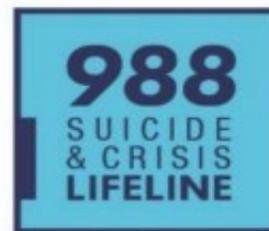
To request Naloxone scan QR code above

Prevent Fatal Overdose

Help Save Lives By Being Prepared



You know CPR. You have a first aid kit. Naloxone is another way to save lives. Keep naloxone at home and work.



1 WORD VOICE LIFE

Be the 1 to start the conversation
www.preventsuicidect.org
CALL 2-1-1



COMMUNITY UPDATES

Take
Control



FREE Live Well with Chronic Conditions Zoom Workshop!

"It's Your Life...Live it Well"

Are you an adult with an ongoing health condition such as arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes or depression? Or do you care for someone who does? This workshop can help you be in control and feel better!



Feel
Better

You will learn:

- Practical ways to deal with pain and fatigue
- Better nutrition and exercise choices
- Better ways to talk to your doctor about your health
- Communication techniques to make your needs known
- How to make a step-by-step plan to improve your life!

Energize

Thursdays, January 11–February 22, 2024

Time: 10am–12pm

To Register: Call Marilia Jose at 203-266-7510 x226

or email mjose@bethlehemct.org

Participants need a tablet, computer, or smartphone.

Books and CD's will be mailed out and are yours to keep!

Space is limited, so sign up today!

Live

Enjoy



Sponsored by the Department of Aging and Disability Services ~ State Unit on Aging, Torrington Area Health District and the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging. Generous support is also provided by the Connecticut Community Foundation.

COMMUNITY UPDATES



Get the Flu Shot Not the Flu



IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO GET A FLU SHOT

SAME DATE APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

**CONTACT THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE TO
SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY.
PATTY 860-489-0436 X 325**

**Vaccines Available:
Seasonal Flu Vaccine for adults 19 and over
HIGH DOSE VACCINE for adults 65 and over**

1. BRING INSURANCE CARD(S)
2. BRING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE
3. WEAR A LOOSE-FITTING SHORT SLEEVE SHIRT SO YOUR SHOULDER CAN BE EASILY ACCESSED.



INSURANCES ACCEPTED:

**MEDICARE (PART B)
CONNECTICARE
ANTHEM BC/BS
AETNA
CIGNA**

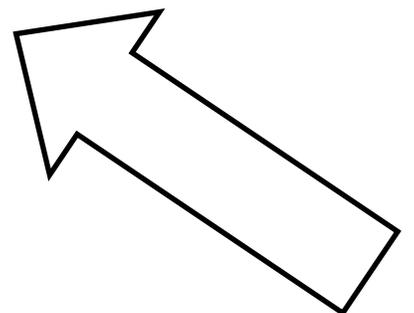
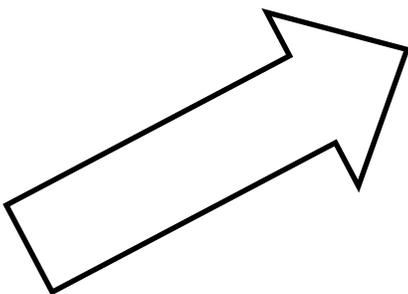
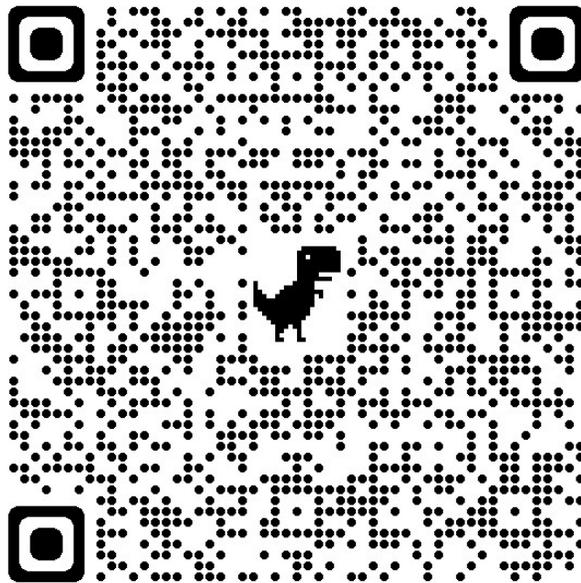
**NO INSURANCE? NO PROBLEM!
ADULT SEASONAL FLU VACCINE \$30
*HIGH DOSE \$70
*65 YEARS AND OLDER**



COMMUNITY UPDATES

Free COVID-19 Test Kits Available to U.S. Households

U.S. households can once again order four free COVID-19 rapid tests through [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov). These tests will detect the [currently circulating COVID-19 variants](#). Individuals are encouraged to use the free tests immediately to prepare for travel and gatherings with friends and family throughout the 2023 holiday season. Households that ordered tests earlier this fall can order four more tests, and those that have not ordered this fall can submit two orders for a total of eight tests. Visit the [Food and Drug Administration website](#) to check the expiration dates of COVID-19 tests.



GET YOUR TICKETS



Presents

From Executive Producer
NEIL deGRASSE TYSON

SHOT IN THE ARM

A person's arm is shown from the elbow to the hand, wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt. The elbow has a white bandage with an orange cross. The hand is holding a black smartphone. Floating around the phone are several social media icons: a red heart with '48', a blue speech bubble with '@ 27', a white speech bubble with '51', an orange speech bubble with '50', and a white speech bubble with '50'.

and Academy Award® Nominee
SCOTT HAMILTON KENNEDY

Disinformation is its own disease.

Film Screening Followed by Q&A Panel Presentation
with the filmmaker

February 7th at 5:30 p.m.

The Warner Theatre Oneglia Auditorium

For Tickets
warnertheatre.org

For More Info
TAHD.org

See our teaser and follow us on social media!
www.shotintheearmmovie.com

