

ConnectiCare

# HEALTH MATTERS

2022, Volume 2





## Low-Cost, Lots of Fun. Budget-Friendly Activities for Fall

The world has been through a lot over the past few years. One thing many people can agree on is that we collectively learned the importance of making time to spend with the people we love. That's a good thing, because research has linked loneliness with a higher risk for several physical and mental health conditions.

These days, it can be difficult to get together in a budget-friendly way. Luckily, there are several free or low-cost activities in Connecticut. This fall, check out these ideas to spend a fun day out without breaking the bank.

### **Spend a (free) day at the museum.**

Though a lot of museums charge an admission fee, there are many in the area that offer free or “pay-what-you-wish” hours.

### **Get outside!**

Connecticut has many hiking trails perfect for activity-seekers of all levels. Apps like AllTrails allow you to filter for nature hikes in your area that meet your criteria — you can search for views, level of difficulty, and elevation gain.

### **Visit your local library.**

Libraries aren’t just a free resource for all the reading material you could ever need. Many also offer a variety of activities for little or no cost. This includes everything from kid-friendly workshops and story time to classes and events that allow adults to gain new skills.

### **Get in touch with your inner farmer.**

Fall is prime time for apple and pumpkin picking in the Northeast. Many farms also have playgrounds on site to keep little ones entertained. If you can’t make it to an actual farm, check out the local farmers markets and spend a Saturday meeting farmers and artisans in the area.

**CTvisit.com** has an extensive list of u-pick farms for the whole family to enjoy.

### **Put your health first.**

Take a virtual or in-person class at a ConnectiCare Center. Go to **visitconnecticare.com** to sign up for classes and find a location near you.

## **OUR FAVORITE MUSEUMS**

The Connecticut College Arboretum in New London; Elizabeth Park Conservancy Rose Garden in Hartford; J. Robert Donnelly Husky Heritage Sports Museum in Storrs; SoundWaters Environmental Education Center in Stamford; Nautilus & Submarine Force Museum in Groton; and the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven all offer free admission.

The Westport Astronomical Society offers free stargazing to the public at its observatory on Wednesday nights from 8–10 p.m. Visit **was-ct.org** for additional information.



# Advance Care Planning

What type of health care would you want if you became too sick to tell the doctor yourself? You can't predict every choice you may need to make about your medical care in the future. But you can help those who matter most to you understand what is right for you and your life.

That's why you should complete an advance care directive — a legal document that outlines your health care wishes. Learn more at [connecticare.com/advancecare](https://connecticare.com/advancecare).

If you're a ConnectiCare Choice Dual (HMO D-SNP) member, you can use a no-cost online Advance Care Planning program to help you prepare and update advance care plan documents, choose a power of attorney, and more. To get started, visit [connecticare.com/planmycare](https://connecticare.com/planmycare) and create an account with your member ID and date of birth.

Questions? Call ConnectiCare Connect Concierge at **800-224-2273** (TTY: **711**), 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week.



## Make the Most of Your Benefits

If you're a ConnectiCare Choice Dual member, and you have over-the-counter (OTC) benefits, you can use your OTC allowance to purchase fresh, healthy food. If you're unsure if your plan includes an OTC allowance, check your Evidence of Coverage (EOC).

Learn more at [connecticare.com/otc](https://connecticare.com/otc).

## Don't Forget Your Flu Vaccine!

This fall and winter, you may have a greater risk of catching and spreading seasonal flu. Even if you've received your COVID-19 vaccine and booster(s), the 2022–23 seasonal flu vaccine — a different vaccine for another virus — adds an additional layer of health protection for you and your family. Visit your doctor or go to a local pharmacy to get your vaccination.



## Visit Us at the ConnectiCare Centers



Trying to choose a health insurance plan? Have questions about your benefits? Come to the ConnectiCare Centers! Our friendly associates are here to support your health care journey.

At the ConnectiCare Centers, we can help you understand your current plan and review available plan options. Learn how to get the most out of your coverage, with a focus on your unique needs. The Centers also offer no-cost health and wellness sessions for the community. All in-person and virtual events are free and open to the public, but registration is required.

Go to [visitconnecticare.com](https://visitconnecticare.com) or call **877-523-6837** (TTY: **711**) to schedule an appointment, sign up for classes, and find a location near you. We look forward to seeing you.

*Health Matters* is published by ConnectiCare to inform members of current health issues and improve the use of services. This publication should not replace the care and advice of your doctor. Always talk to your doctor about your personal health needs. Other providers are available in the network. Out-of-network/non-contracted providers are under no obligation to treat Plan members, except in emergency situations. Please call our Member Services number or see your Evidence of Coverage for more information, including the cost-sharing that applies to out-of-network services.



# Care for Your Smile



Oral (mouth) health is a doorway to overall health and wellness. How well you care for your teeth, and your entire mouth, can affect more than you may realize.

Tooth decay and gum disease are two common conditions that, if left untreated, can lead to tooth loss, which can drastically affect your health and quality of life. Care for your smile and your health by practicing good oral hygiene: brushing your teeth, flossing, and visiting your dentist regularly (at least once a year).

If your plan includes dental coverage, schedule an appointment with your dentist today. Don't have a dentist? You can find one by signing in to your member portal at [my.connecticare.com](https://my.connecticare.com). Click "Find Care" and choose your plan name in the drop-down menu. Choose "Dental" as your Service Type. The results of your search will only include providers available in your selected plan or network. For help finding a dentist or understanding your benefits, you can also call our dental provider, Healthplex, at **855-999-2329** (TTY: **800-662-1220**), available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Not sure if your plan includes dental coverage? Check your summary of benefits or call the Member Services number on your ID card.

Source: CDC



## Call 988 for Help in a Mental Health Crisis

There's a new, shorter number to get help in a mental health crisis. The **988** Suicide & Crisis Lifeline makes it easier than ever to get free and confidential help anytime, day or night. The 24/7 support line is answered by a national network of crisis centers, with each state operating their own services.

The support line is available for a variety of mental health concerns. For example, people can contact **988** if they are:

- Experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- Having a mental health or substance use-related crisis.
- Feeling any kind of emotional distress.
- Concerned about someone else in distress..

The Connecticut **988** Contact Center is operated by the United Way of Connecticut and funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Department of Children and Families. Mental health services are also available by dialing **211** in Connecticut, with the same trained professionals answering calls.

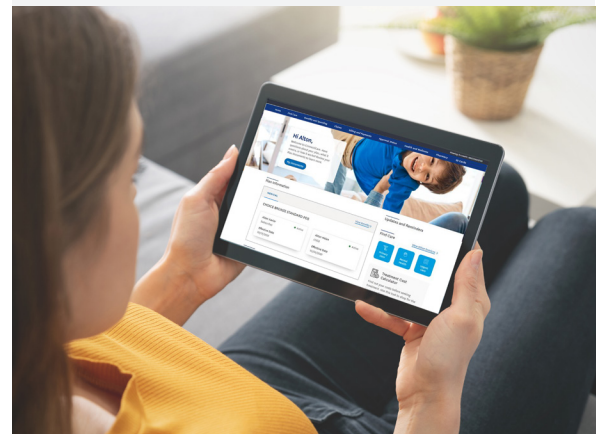
Anyone in need of mental support services can call or text **988** or chat at **988lifeline.org**. Veterans can dial "1" after calling **988** or text **838255** to be connected to the Veterans Crisis Lifeline.

*The new **988** hotline connects you to services based on your phone's area code. If you live in Connecticut but have a phone number from another area, please call **211** to be connected directly to Connecticut mental health services.*

## Check Out Our New Member Portal

Have you visited your new member portal, **myConnectiCare**, lately? It's a one-stop-shop to help you take control of your health. Sign in to find doctors and hospitals, choose a primary care provider (PCP), download a virtual ID card, view plan documents, opt to go paperless, and more!

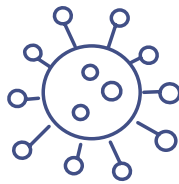
If you don't have an account, go to **my.connecticare.com**, click "Register," and fill in the required information. You'll immediately be able to view your account.



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# Feeling Sick? Here's How To Tell if It's the Flu, a Cold, or COVID-19



It's important to know the signs of COVID-19, the common cold, and the flu — all contagious respiratory illnesses.

Many flu and cold symptoms are similar to symptoms of COVID-19. All three may present with a fever, body aches, and a cough.

There are some key differences. For example, COVID-19 may cause a loss of taste or smell and shortness of breath. These are not typically signs of the flu or a cold.

SYMPTOMS	FLU	COVID-19
Fever or chills	Sometimes	Yes
Sore throat	Sometimes	Yes
Runny or stuffy nose	Sometimes	Yes
Muscle or body aches	Yes	Yes
Headache	Yes	Yes
Fatigue	Yes	Yes
Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea	Yes*	Yes
Cough	Yes	Yes
Shortness of breath	No	Yes
New loss of taste or smell	No	Yes

\*More common in children than adults.

Source: CDC