

Community Connections

Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Berlin, Bolton, Boxborough, Devens, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley, Stow and Townsend

NASHOBA
ASSOCIATED
BOARDS OF
HEALTH
(NABH)

NASHOBA
NURSING
SERVICE &
HOSPICE



Ayer, MA
Photo Credit: Bridgette Braley

Greetings from the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health!

Hopefully, we've put the worse of cold and flu season behind us so we're on our way to better health and brighter days.

We've all been hearing about Coronavirus; for this reason we've included some information on pages 2 & 3, but we encourage you to visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) websites for ongoing, reliable, up-to-date information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Happy Spring, everyone!

Warm regards,
Tamara Bedard, RN
Community Health Manager
978-772-3335 ext. 340



SAVE THE DATE!

We'll be hosting our annual COA director and outreach luncheon on **Tuesday, May 5th 12-2pm**. Cinco de Mayo! Stay tuned for more details.

Inside this issue:

- Coronavirus Updates **2,3**
- Managing Environmental Allergies **4**
- Breathe Easier: Make Your Home Asthma (COPD) Friendly **5**
- Dementia: Community Education Series **6**
- Clinic Schedule **7**



COVID-19 (coronavirus) Information

The information regarding the COVID-19 (coronavirus) is evolving and you can expect guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) will be updated as these agencies receive new information.

It is important to get you information from reliable sources and the links to CDC and DPH are provided as part of this message; visiting these sites will keep you informed and will provide you with the most up to date information on the situation.

The CDC has called on individuals, businesses, schools and governments to consider steps they can take to better prepare themselves, their employees and the citizens for potential disruptions which could occur in the event that cases of COVID-19 increase.

Individuals should follow the prevention actions listed below, excerpted from the CDC website as of 2/25/2020, to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- ***Avoid close contact with people who are sick.***
- ***Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.***
- ***Stay home when you are sick.***
- ***Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.***
- ***Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.***
- ***Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.***
 - ***CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.***
 - ***Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).***
 - ***Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.***
 - ***If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.***



COVID-19 (coronavirus) Information

There has been public inquiry about the use of masks or respirators and currently the CDC and DPH don't recommend the widespread use of masks or respirators. Here is the recommendation from the DPH:

Should I wear a respirator in public?

CDC does not recommend the routine use of respirators outside of workplace settings (in the community). Most often, spread of respiratory viruses from person-to-person happens among close contacts (within 6 feet). CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as avoiding people who are sick, avoiding touching your eyes or nose, and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue. People who are sick should stay home and not go into crowded public places or visit people in hospitals. Workers who are sick should follow CDC guidelines and stay home when they are sick.

[https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov#printable-fact-sheets-](https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov#printable-fact-sheets)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

We at the Health Department are available to speak to citizens regarding questions they may have and help them find answers to their questions.



Preventing Environmental Allergy Symptoms

After the cold, dark winter, we are more than ready for the warm fresh air, sunshine and new life spring brings. However, this time of year can present real challenges for those suffering with seasonal allergies. If you or your family members suffer from environmental allergies, here are some helpful tips to help decrease allergy symptoms:

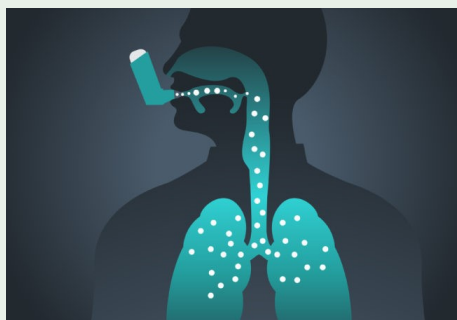
- ◆ Keep windows closed inside your home and car
- ◆ Keep pets out of the bedroom
- ◆ Shower and wash your hair before going to bed
- ◆ Change your clothes soon after coming inside
- ◆ Wash bedding in hot water
- ◆ Use dust mite covers on all bedding
- ◆ Wash hands frequently with soap and water
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes
- ◆ Monitor daily pollen counts and avoid going outdoors during high pollen times
- ◆ Always consult your health care provider before taking medications,; if you take over the counter allergy medication such as Claritin or Zyrtec, take the medication daily and follow directions carefully to be effective against allergies
- ◆ Speak with your health care provider if symptoms persist

<https://acaai.org/allergies/seasonal-allergies>

<https://www.aafa.org/rhinitis-nasal-allergy-hayfever/>



What about Asthma?



Asthma is a chronic lung disease. Although asthma cannot be cured, here's how you can keep it under good control:

- ◆ be aware of symptoms and warning signs
- ◆ use medicines properly to treat and prevent asthma episodes
- ◆ avoid the things that “trigger” your symptoms and can make your asthma worse.
- ◆ Use the list on the next page to help make your home a healthier environment, so you can breathe easier.

Asthma-Friendly Home Checklist

-The Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America

<https://asthmaandallergies.org/asthma-allergies/asthma-in-older-adults/>

Make YOUR home “asthma-friendly”

Here are some examples of indoor allergens that are among the most common triggers of asthma.

DUST MITES: They are too small to be seen but are found in every home. They live in mattresses, pillows, carpets, clothes, upholstered furniture and other fabric items.

What you can do: Cover mattresses and pillows with special allergy-proof encasings. Wash sheets, pillow cases and blankets in hot water every week. Remove carpets, especially in the bedroom and any carpets laid on concrete. Eliminate “clutter” and things that collect dust (e.g. curtains or drapes). Clean often with a vacuum that has a high efficiency (HEPA) filter. Dust regularly using a damp cloth.

MOLD and MILDEW grow in damp and humid places, such as bathrooms, kitchens and basements.

What you can do: Use exhaust fans or open windows to increase ventilation from showers, cooking, cleaning, using the dishwasher or doing laundry. Wash molds off hard surfaces using a water, vinegar and soap mix. Keep humidity low; use a dehumidifier in the basement if necessary. Keep air conditioner and heating filters clean and dry. Fix leaks and moisture problems and keep things dry and clean in places where mold tends to grow (e.g., showers, under sinks, refrigerator drip pans)

PETS and PESTS: Both can be a problem for people with allergies and asthma. Animal dander from a pet’s skin flakes, saliva or urine can attach itself to anything (floors, ceilings, clothing or furniture). Droppings or remains of pests such as cockroaches or rodents can be asthma triggers.

What you can do: Find out what type of pets you are allergic to through allergy testing and do not have that type of pet in your home. Consider keeping pets outdoors or finding them a new home if necessary. Keep pets out of the bedroom at all times and keep the door closed. Keep pets away from fabric-covered furniture and rugs or carpets. Store food in airtight containers; don’t leave pet food out to attract pests. Plug up holes in walls and window frames to prevent pests from entering. Eliminate pest hiding places (e.g., newspapers, grocery bags, cardboard).

SMOKE, FUMES and ODORS can aggravate airway inflammation and asthma.

What you can do: Don’t smoke, or allow others to smoke in your home or in your car. Avoid fumes and odors from cleaning supplies, bleach, paints, cosmetics, perfumes. Use fragrance-free or simple products (e.g., baking soda, vinegar). Don’t use scented candles, room “fresheners,” hairspray, or other aerosol products that put irritants into the air that you breathe. When you clean, “pour and wipe” rather than spray.

Other Important Asthma Tips

- ◆ Make sure you get a written Asthma Action Plan from your doctor, with details about your allergies, what medications to take regularly to control symptoms, and what to do if you feel your asthma is getting worse.
- ◆ Talk over other health conditions you may have, and medications you are taking.
- ◆ Practice with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist how to use asthma tools, such as inhalers and spacers, so you get the most from your medications.
- ◆ Get protected with pneumonia vaccinations and annual flu shots.

For more information, contact:

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America New England Chapter Tel. 781-444-7778

E-mail: aafane@aafane.org www.asthmaandallergies.org

Other resources: <https://www.epa.gov/asthma> , <https://asthmaandallergies.org/asthma-allergies/asthma-in-older-adults/>



Our Dementia Community Education Series Continues...

Do you know someone living with dementia?
Are you caring for someone with dementia?



This dementia community education series will help you understand what dementia is and isn't, how to better interact with people with dementia and what to expect as the disease progresses. This series is beneficial for caregivers, health care professionals, and community members. There will be guest speakers and handouts will be provided. This event is **FREE & open to the public.**

Takes place at:

Nashoba Valley Medical Center - Founder's Room/Conference Room B
200 Groton Road, Ayer, MA 01432

2:30-3:30PM

March 24th—Sun Downing: What it is and how to manage

April 28th-Medications and medication management

May 19th-Challenging Behaviors: with guest speaker Mal Allard

June 23rd-Planning for the Future: guest speaker Nancy Catalini Chew, Esq.

July 28th- End stage: How to prepare for end-of-life



Presented by: *Whitney Rohrer*, OTR/L
Nashoba Nursing Service & Hospice
978-425-6675

CLINIC SCHEDULE

Dates & times are subject to change

*Please check our website for more information: www.nashoba.org

Town	Clinic Location	Address	Day	Time
Ashburnham	Town Hall	32 Main St	4th Mon	11-12
Ayer	Cambridge St. Office	51 Cambridge St.	Every Fri By appt. only	9-12
Ayer	COA at Senior Housing	18 Pond St.	3rd Fri	11-12
Berlin	First Parish Church	24 Central St.	1st Thurs	9:30-11:00
Bolton	Senior Housing/ Senior Center	600 Main St.	3rd Thurs	9:30-11:30
Boxborough	Community Center at the United Church of Christ, Congregational	723 Massachusetts Ave	4th Tues	11:30-12:30
Dunstable	Library	588 Main St	4th Wed	11-12
Groton	Senior Center	163 West Main St	3rd Wed	1:30-2:30
Harvard	Hildreth House (COA)	13 Ayer Rd	3rd Tues	12:30-1:30
Lancaster	Community Center	39 Harvard Rd	1st Tues	8-10
Littleton	COA Room 230	33 Shattuck St.	2nd Tues	10-11
Lunenburg	Eagle House	25 Memorial Dr.	4th Thurs	9-11
Pepperell	Senior Center	37 Nashua Rd.	3rd Wed	10-12
Shirley	Senior Center	9 Parker Rd.	2nd Thurs	9:30-10:30
Stow	Senior Center	509 Great Rd	1st Wed	10-12
Townsend	Senior Center	16 Dudley Rd.	2nd Wed	12-2

