

# healthwise

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## Immunize here. Be safe there.

Traveling to exciting new places and seeing unforgettable sights can make you feel wonderfully alive. Travel can be relaxing and enriching and can be a great way to recharge your batteries. Due to a global marketplace, many business

people are sent overseas for a length of time. According to Abinash Virk, M.D., Director of the Travel and Geographic Medicine Clinic at the Mayo Clinic, "It's becoming easier to travel about anywhere in the world. As a result, more people are picking up rare and exotic diseases that you wouldn't expect to see in the United States."

The World Health Organization advises travelers to consult a travel medicine clinic or personal physician 4-6 weeks before departure if the travel destination is one where exposure to vaccine-preventable diseases may occur. Travel medicine is highly specialized and the informa-

tion is changing daily. **Where can a traveler go to get the most accurate and up to date information and immunizations? The Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association's travel clinic** at 90 East Ridge, Ridgefield, Connecticut.

The Ridgefield VNA's travel clinic offers a complete pre-trip consultation utilizing state of the art software that will generate a traveler health report. The report not only includes immunization recommendations, but an entire profile on the country to which you are traveling.

Fifteen different adult immunizations are offered, as well as prescriptions for malaria pre-exposure medication and TB testing. The traveler health report will determine which immunizations are recommended, the traveler will be given information on each vaccine and will be able to ask any questions he or she might have. The traveler will be able to make an informed decision on which vaccines to receive.

The Ridgefield VNA's travel clinic is open to any traveler over the age of 18 years. If you want to make an appointment for a pre-trip consultation or have any other questions regarding travel health, please call 438-5555 to speak to Sandy Weinberg, RN, BSN, Director of Community Programs. ●

## {HEALTH EVENTS}

### WELL CHILD CLINICS

(monthly by appointment)

**Camp, Sport, School Physicals and Immunizations** for children ages birth through 18 years.

\$50 maximum fee including immunizations. Sliding scale available.

### MENINGITIS VACCINE CLINICS

(by appointment)

June 15, June 27 & July 12, 5:00-7:00pm

Geared towards college bound and boarding school students. \$125

### FREE BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

**1st Monday of each month** at

Ballard Green, 9:30am-11:00pm

**1st Thursday of each month** at

Founders Hall, 12:00pm-1:00pm

**3rd Wednesday of each month** at

the RVNA, 1:00pm-2:00pm

### CHOLESTEROL SCREENING

(by appointment)

**1st Wednesday of each month**

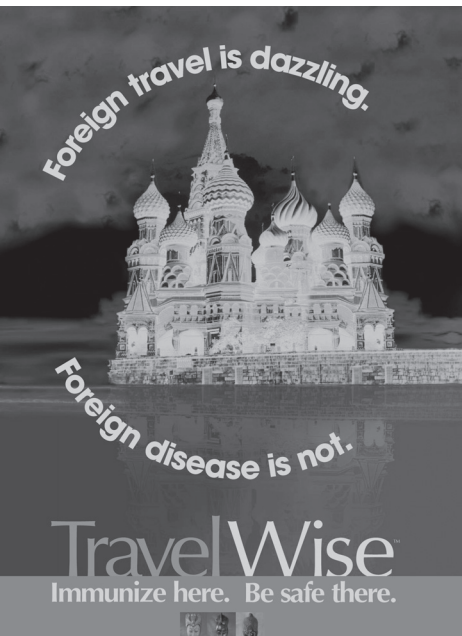
at the RVNA 8:30am to 10:30am

Non-fasting Test = \$25

Fasting Test = \$35 (12 hour fast required)

**For more information about any of our health events, please call 203.438.5555**

**rvna**  
RIDGEFIELD VISITING  
NURSE ASSOCIATION



IT'S A DIFFERENT  
WORLD OUT  
THERE. SO BEFORE  
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THE KNOW.

WHEN YOU KNOW  
WHAT TO WATCH  
FOR, AND HOW  
TO TAKE CARE OF  
YOURSELF, YOU'RE  
ON THE ROAD  
TO A SAFER,  
HEALTHIER TRIP.

# A MESSAGE to our friends:

We are reminded everyday how important quality of life and peace of mind can be. That's why the Ridgefield VNA remains committed to the health, safety and well-being of our community.

RVNA, as a 501c(3) nonprofit, has been a part of the greater Ridgefield community since 1914. We have continued to adapt with the changing needs of this growing community providing home health care from birth to end of life. As a high quality home healthcare provider we have received a 98.5% recommendation rating from our patients. Our professional skill and capacity for service have also been recognized by the Community Health Accreditation Program.

Facing increased competition from a growing number of healthcare providers, our charitable, mission driven service organization has adopted a new approach to healthcare that significantly broadens our range of services while enhancing our value to those we serve. Our Community Health Fair, flu and blood pressure clinics are well attended and anticipated by area residents. In addition to traditional home care services, we are now offering home telemonitoring, travel immunization, an assisted living program and other innovations.

We need your help to continue our tradition of quality care. These programs and services require over \$500,000 each year in contributions from individuals, businesses and foundations. Your contributions, of any size, make a difference to those in need of home health care and wellness services in the greater Ridgefield community. You can make a contribution by mail to Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association, 90 East Ridge, Ridgefield, CT 06877 or through our website [www.ridgefieldvna.org](http://www.ridgefieldvna.org).

Sincerely,



*Bill Wyman*  
**William Wyman**  
 Chair, Board of Directors



*Jane Fields*  
**Jane Fields**  
 President & CEO

## Simple Measures to Prevent Tick Bites



**It never hurts** to be reminded of the simple measures one can take to protect themselves and their family from Lyme Disease. Ticks that transmit Lyme Disease are most active in May, June, and July so this is the time of year to take extra precautions. According to the Centers for Disease Control's Division of Vector-Borne Infectious Diseases, here are some of the top tips for preventing tick bites.

- Ticks prefer wooded, bushy areas with high grass and a lot of leaf litter. These are areas to avoid.
- Use insect repellent with 20%-30% DEET on adult skin and clothing to prevent tick bites. Effective repellents are found in drug, grocery, or discount stores.
- Wear long pants, long sleeves, and long socks to keep ticks off your skin. Tuck your pant legs into socks or boots and tuck your shirt into your pants.
- Perform daily tick checks after being outdoors, even in your own yard. Inspect all parts of your body carefully. If you find any ticks, remove immediately using a fine tipped tweezers.
- If a tick is attached to your skin for less than 24 hours, your chance of getting Lyme Disease is extremely small. But just to be safe, monitor your health closely after a tick bite and be alert for any signs and symptoms of tick-borne illness.
- Typical symptoms of Lyme Disease may include a circular rash at the sight of the tick bite that appears after 3-30 days, fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle/joint aches, and swollen lymph nodes. See your doctor immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.

For more information on Lyme Disease and other tick-borne illnesses, go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

[www.ridgefieldvna.org](http://www.ridgefieldvna.org)

Check out our new website for upcoming programs and current information! Go online to sign up to receive our free newsletter via email.



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# Are You At Risk for Falling?



**One in three seniors** fall each year with one-half of these falls occurring around the home. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths and every hour an older adult dies as a result of a fall.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Taking the time to think about the risk factors in your own home and related to your health could prevent a life threatening injury. Consider the following:

- Have you had a fall within the last six months
- Do you take four or more medications
- Do you feel weak or dizzy when standing
- Do you forget to use your walker/cane
- Do you have visual problems
- Do you have chronic pain
- Have you experienced any injury or illness which compromised your balance
- Do you have poor lighting in your home
- Do you have loose rugs in your home
- Are your walkways cluttered or obstructed
- Do you wear slippery soled shoes or heels
- Do you go to the bathroom several times during the night
- Have you been instructed in properly using your cane or walker
- Do you have grab bars or bed rails
- Is your walker/cane or other equipment adjusted to the appropriate height and in good repair

These are just some examples of risk factors that could lead to serious falls in the home. If you identify any risk factors that apply to you, an extensive home evaluation to improve the safety of your home environment may be indicated. Your doctor can assist you in making that determination and order a Physical Therapy evaluation when appropriate. For more information you can contact: Tricia Brody, Manager of Rehabilitation at Ridgefield VNA, 438-5555. ●



The revolutionary easy to use **Health Watch Personal Response System** provides the safety net many people need to continue living independently at home in familiar and comfortable surroundings. Programmable to serve as a medication reminder and/or fall detector, it provides families with peace of mind knowing their loved ones are safe and secure. To learn more about the most advanced personal Monitoring technologies available and the 24-hour Connection to the Health Watch Response Center, call the Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association at 203.438.5555, ext. 1222 or visit us online at [www.ridgefieldvna.org](http://www.ridgefieldvna.org).

On Saturday, March 25th RVNA held its **32nd Annual Community Health Fair** at the Ridgefield Community Center. The event was a great success offering over 50 free screenings and informational booths. We would especially like to thank all our dedicated volunteers who gave so much to make the day special!

On the morning of Friday, May 5th over 350 area residents and RVNA supporters attended the **6th Annual RVNA Spring Breakfast** fundraiser. We are happy to announce that the breakfast was a great success and raised 10% more funds than last year! Thank you to everyone who worked so hard on this project, businesses and individuals who donated items for our raffle/live auction, table sponsors, and attendees!

Three nurses at RVNA have been honored with receiving **The Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing**. Ann Hawkins, RN, Maggie Hrdina, RN, and Theresa Santoro, RN were nominated by their peers due to their significant impact on patient care and showing commitment to the community they serve.

The **Ridgefield Emergency Relief Fund** recently received a \$500 donation presented to them by the Ridgefield VNA. The donation was made on behalf of the many town residents who participated in a survey conducted in December and January. The survey provided information to Ridgefield VNA to be used in the strategic planning process. Fazzi Associate Inc., the research firm who conducted the survey, provided the donation.



RIDGEFIELD VISITING  
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90 East Ridge  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

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“healthwise”

our new newsletter.  
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# avian flu facts:

You may be wondering why all the hype about avian flu in the media these days. Let’s start at the beginning:

Avian Influenza also known as bird flu is an infection in birds caused by the flu virus. Wild birds carry these viruses in their intestines, and usually do not get sick from them. However it is highly contagious among birds and some domestic birds including chickens, ducks and turkeys can become very sick and die from avian influenza.

The concern about bird flu (Influenza Type A subtype H5N1) is that it will mutate to a form that spreads easily from human to human. The requirements for a pandemic (worldwide epidemic) include: 1. a new human Influenza A subtype; 2. causes serious illness; and 3. spreads easily from human to human. The prerequisites for the first 2 have been met, but NOT the 3rd. Most cases of bird flu have been attributed to direct contact with infected birds. As of May 23, 2006 there have been 218 human cases and 124 deaths.\* Each new human infection is an opportunity for the virus to change.

This year we have seen a rapid spread along the path of migratory birds. It is expected to reach Alaska this year through that path. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is monitoring live poultry markets including those in Connecticut, for signs of the disease.

At this time there is no vaccine for avian flu, although it is in clinical trials. Antiviral medications may be useful in treatment, however there are issues of availability should a pandemic arise before adequate amounts have been stockpiled. That is why it is crucial for families to have emergency supplies including food and water.

RVNA is working on a prototype of emergency backpacks which should be available by September 2006. If avian flu becomes the next pandemic, area hospitals would quickly become overwhelmed and many patients would be treated at home. RVNA is preparing to serve the community in this capacity. Home Care is our business! For more information about avian flu and how to prepare, go to [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) or [www.cdc.gov/flu/avian](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian). ●

\* According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cumulative number confirmed human cases of avian influenza, 2003 to present.