

A Guide to



Healthy Meetings and Events



City of Meriden
Department of Health and Human Services
Fall 2010

"Organizations are important components of social and physical environments, and they exert considerable influence over the choices people make, the resources they have to aid them in those choices, and the factors in the workplace that could influence healthy lifestyles status."

-Institute of Medicine

Introduction

Obesity and obesity-related chronic diseases have reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Every year, U.S. businesses spend billions of dollars on the healthcare of their employees for diseases that are impacted by obesity and inactivity such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and cancer. As technology continues to improve, the need for physical exertion on the job continues to decrease. Longer work weeks, fast-paced lifestyles, family commitments, as well as other reasons, are driving Americans to eat more on the go than ever before. For employees, demands of the job and fast-paced lifestyles pose a significant challenge to maintaining individual health. For employers, poor employee health leads to lower productivity, lower morale, higher absenteeism, and higher insurance claims.

If our communities are going to make strides in reducing obesity and employers are going to offset the rising costs of healthcare, then **we need to reach employees where they spend most of their day...at work.** Worksite health promotion programs are a convenient option for assisting employees in health and lifestyle areas that ultimately affect the company's bottom line. Research continues to show a return on investment to employers when they invest money in the health of their employees through comprehensive health promotion programs. Additionally, worksite health promotion programs continue to gain popularity as an outstanding recruitment and retention tool to attract and maintain high quality employees that are healthier and more productive. Whether the employee or employer takes the initiative, worksites can be a great environment to create and support change.

Congratulations on creating a healthy workplace for your employees, co-workers and customers. The Meriden Health Department hopes you find the information in this booklet helpful.

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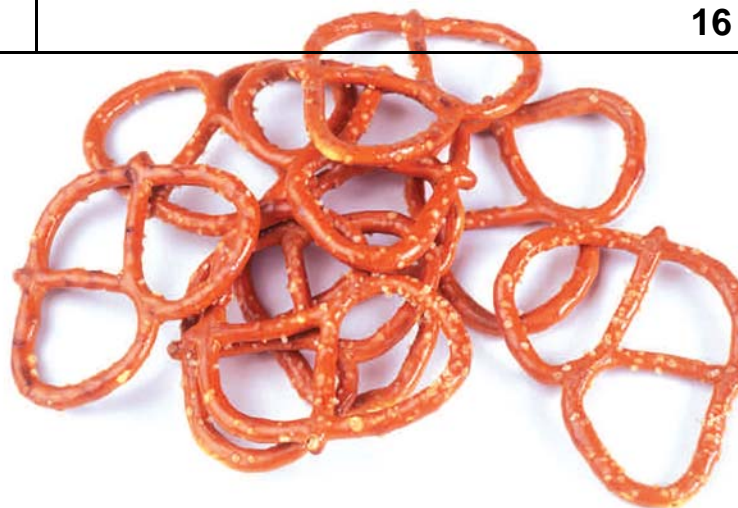
**Ask:
How can we do it
HEALTHIER
to benefit our
employees, co-workers,
customers, and business?**

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If you have any questions about this booklet, or would like help setting up your workplace wellness program, please contact:

Meriden Health Department
165 Miller Street
Meriden, CT 06450
(203) 630-4238 (Health Education)
www.meridenhealth.com





Essential Ingredients of a Healthy Diet and Active Lifestyle

◆ **Eat 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 14% of adults eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. A variety of colorful fruit and vegetables contribute essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber. Limit juices, high in calories and low in fiber, to less than 6-8 ounces per serving.

◆ **Drink water.**

Water meets the body's fluid needs. Beverages such as sodas, coffee specialty drinks and other sweetened drinks can add hundreds of calories a day without any nutritional value.

◆ **Consume less bad fat, more good fat.**

There are benefits to eating less saturated fat and eliminating trans fats, both contributors to heart disease. Saturated fats are found in red meat, cold cuts, butter, cheese, and milk products. Trans fats are found in processed, baked, and fried foods made with "partially hydrogenated" oils. There are health benefits from consuming healthy fats such as mono- and polyunsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids, found in olive or canola oils, corn and soybean oils, nuts and seeds, peanut butter and avocados, and salmon and tuna.

◆ **Choose whole grains.**

Whole grains found in breads, cereals, rice, crackers, bulgur, and many other less refined starches provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals that help us feel more satisfied because they take longer to digest, delaying hunger between meals. Half of our daily grains should be whole grains.

◆ **Reduce sodium and sugar.**

Research shows that eating less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium (about 1 tsp of salt) per day may reduce the risk of high blood pressure. Most of the sodium people eat comes from processed foods, not from the salt shaker. Sugars contribute calories with few, if any, nutrients. Look for food and beverages low in added sodium and sugar. Do not put salt shakers on the table

◆ **Eat healthy portions.**

Portion sizes of many foods purchased and eaten outside of the home have increased dramatically, which in turn has caused increases in body weight. For example, bagels, muffins, cooking and sandwiches have doubled or tripled in size and calories over the past several decades. Choices for healthy portions can be offered by requesting smaller or "mini" portions from the caterer, cutting baked goods and sandwiches in half, or providing smaller plates for people to eat off of.

◆ **Be active.**

Regular physical activity helps manage body weight, boosts mood and energy levels, and is important for overall health and fitness. The general recommendation is to be active for at least 30 minutes over the course of the day. Just 10 minutes of an activity break during a long meeting can support participants in achieving this goal.

Guidelines for Healthy Food Choices at Meetings and Events

Healthy food can certainly taste good. Offering healthy choices at meetings and events can make it easier for people to eat healthy foods and be physically active. Making simple changes to foods and drinks gives your co-workers, colleagues, guests and program participants an energy boost without worries about too many calories, too much unhealthy fat, and too much sodium. Whether you purchase food from a caterer, local grocery store, or big box food store, it is recommended to include items that are outlined in this guide.

Menu Suggestions

Breakfast

- Fresh fruit (cut up and offered with low-fat yogurt dip)
- High-fiber cereals such as bran flakes, low-fat granola or oatmeal
- Fruit toppings, such as fresh blueberries, for hot and cold cereals
- Hard cooked eggs
- Vegetable omelets
- Low-fat, low-sugar yogurts
- Whole grain bagels (cut in half) served with fruit spreads, jams, hummus, or low-fat cream cheese.
- Coffee and tea with skim and 1% milk, 100% fruit juices served in 6-8oz glasses.

Light Refreshments

- Consider if it is necessary to offer a snack at mid-morning or mid-afternoon meetings or during longer events. If you do offer a food break, consider:
- Fresh sliced fruit and vegetable tray (with optional low-fat dips)
 - Low-fat cheeses with whole grain crackers
 - Baked pita chips served with hummus
 - Whole grain muffins (cut in half if not serving mini-muffins) and whole grain breads
 - Low-fat, low-sugar yogurts
 - Pretzels, popcorn (butter-free), baked chips, or trail mixes
 - Water and seltzer waters or 100% fruit juices served in 6-8oz glasses. No sugar-sweetened beverages!

Lunch and Dinner

- Salad that includes a variety of greens and served with low-fat dressing
- Whole grain breads and rolls
- Mustard and low-fat mayonnaise as condiments for sandwiches
- Sandwiches presented in halves
- Broth-based soups, or soups using evaporated skim milk instead of cream
- Pasta dishes made with part-skim cheeses and whole wheat pasta; pizza made with whole wheat crust, vegetable toppings, and part-skim cheese.
- Vegetables - steamed, fresh or cooked without butter or cream sauces.
- 4-ounce maximum portions of meat and plenty of low-fat, low-calorie side dishes.
- Water and seltzer waters or 100% fruit juices served in 6-8oz glasses. No sugar-sweetened beverages!

Healthy Meetings and Events:

Vendor Information

The following are general guidelines to give to vendors supplying food and beverage at your meeting and other events. It is important to provide delicious, healthy food choices to help people eat well. We hope that this information will help you work with us to provide healthy meals to our participants.

General Guidelines:

- ✓ Offer low-calorie and low-fat foods and/or smaller portions
- ✓ Always offer vegetables, fruit and low-fat milk
- ✓ Include a vegetarian option at all meals.
- ✓ Provide pitchers of water, do not serve sugar-sweetened beverages
- ✓ If serving a dessert, provide fresh fruit, fruit crisps, or small servings of sorbet.

Menu Suggestions

Breakfast

- Fresh fruit.
- Yogurt
- High-fiber cereals such as bran flakes, low-fat granola and oatmeal.
- Hard cooked eggs.
- Vegetable omelets and eggs made with egg substitutes or without yolks.
- Thinly sliced ham, Canadian bacon or veggie sausages.
- Whole grain bagels, cut in half, served with fruit spreads, jams, or low-fat cream cheese.
- Coffee and tea with skim and 1% milk.

Light Refreshments

- Fresh sliced fruit and vegetable tray - offered with low-fat dips.
- Whole grain crackers or granola bars (5g of fat or less per serving)
- Pita chips served with hummus.
- Whole grain muffins (cut in half if not serving mini-muffins) and whole grain breads.
- Low-fat yogurt.
- Baked chips, pretzels, butter-free popcorn.
- Water, sparkling water, seltzer or 100% fruit juices served in 6-8oz glasses.

Lunch and Dinner

- Salad that includes a variety of greens and served with low-fat dressing
- Whole grain breads and rolls
- Mustard and low-fat mayonnaise as condiments for sandwiches
- Sandwiches presented in halves
- Broth-based soups, or soups using evaporated skim milk instead of cream
- Pasta dishes made with part-skim cheeses and whole wheat pasta; pizza made with whole wheat crust, vegetable toppings, and part-skim cheese.
- Vegetables - steamed, fresh or cooked without butter or cream sauces.
- 4-ounce maximum portions of meat and plenty of low-fat, low-calorie side dishes.
- Water, sparkling water, seltzer or 100% fruit juices served in 6-8oz glasses.



Menu Suggestions For Healthy Choices

The resource chart can help with planning and selecting food and beverages for meetings and events. This list is not all-inclusive; it is meant to provide representative examples.

Choose more of these:	Choose fewer of these:
In General	
Healthy portions (small to moderate) and half portions	Large portions
Food prepared by baking, roasting, broiling, grilling, poaching, steaming, stir-frying	Fried food, food prepared or served with a lot of added oil, fat, mayonnaise, and/or dressing
Foods prepared with healthy fats such as olive, canola, and soybean oils	Foods prepared with oils or spreads made from trans fat (partially hydrogenated fat), butter or cream
Whole grain products <u>without</u> trans fat, high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) or added sugar	Baked goods with white flour, trans fats, HFCS, and/or high sugar content
Fruits and vegetables in a variety of colors, sides and platters including fruit and vegetables	Starchy sides without fruit and vegetables and platters with only refined carbohydrate choices
Snacks & Appetizers	
Fruit: whole or sliced such as berries, melon, pineapple, grapes, apples, bananas, dried fruit	Baked goods high in sugar and/or cakes pastries, cookies, pies
Vegetables: whole or sliced such as baby carrots, pear/cherry tomatoes, broccoli & cauliflower florets, celery, bell pepper; raw, grilled or roasted	Vegetables prepared with a lot of added fat, fried or served with high fat dips or dressings
Whole grain crackers and breads/pita/tortillas	White flour crackers and breads/pita/tortillas
Baked chips, pretzels, low fat popcorn, breadsticks, rice cakes, “popped” or “puffed” snacks	Fried chips, regular popcorn
Spreads and dips: hummus, olive tapenade, tuna with lemon, small cheese cubes, salsa, low-fat dips	Spreads and dips: large cheese cubes/slices, salami, high fat dips such as ranch.

Choose more of these:	Choose fewer of these:
Beverages	
Water and carbonated water, unflavored or flavored without sweetener	Soda and other sweetened drinks (fruit-flavored drinks, juice “blends” or “cocktails”, sports drinks)
Coffee and hot tea (decaf or regular), herbal tea <i>Offer skim or low fat milk in addition to half & half</i>	Sports and energy drinks with caloric sweetener and/or high caffeine content
100% fruit or vegetable juices, less than 6-8 ounces per serving	Juices less than 100% fruit, fruit-flavored drinks, servings of juice greater than 6-8 ounces.
Unsweetened iced teas	Sweetened iced teas
Nonfat (skim) or 1% milk, nondairy alternatives such as soy, almond, or rice milk	Whole or 2% milk, flavored milks
Breakfast	
Fruit: fresh, frozen, canned (unsweetened); see snacks & appetizer section	Fruit canned in syrup or sweetened
Eggs prepared with minimal added fat, egg white dishes, vegetable omelets	Egg dishes with a lot of added fat such as butter, cream, meat and/or cheese
Lean sausage and bacon (or meat substitute)	Regular bacon and sausage
Low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese; yogurt or cottage cheese fruit parfaits	Regular fat and sugar yogurt or cottage cheese; yogurt with high fructose corn syrup
Low-fat/high fiber granola	Regular granola with high fat, sugar, low fiber
Mini whole wheat bagels, muffins, small portion baked goods	Regular or large baked goods, croissants
Nonfat or low-fat spreads such as low-fat cream cheeses or fruit spreads, salsa, nut butters	Butter or regular cream cheese spreads
Baked alternatives to fried potatoes/hash browns	Fried foods such as hash browns
Nuts and fresh or dried fruit such as berries or apples to top cereal and yogurt	-

Choose more of these:	Choose fewer of these:
Lunch, Dinner & Boxed Lunches	
Vegetables; fresh, steamed, oven roasted or grilled; see <i>Snacks & Appetizers</i> section	Vegetables fried or in butter, cream or mayo sauces such as béchamel, hollandaise, aioli
Whole grain breads, pasta, and tortillas, corn tortillas, brown rice and wraps	Breads, pasta, and tortillas made with white flour, white rice, biscuits, croissants
Lean protein such as skinless turkey or grilled chicken, fish, tofu, beans/legumes; nut butters	Higher fat/saturated fat protein such as ham, beef, poultry with skin, cheese, fish packed in oil
Platters of half-sandwiches or “tea sandwiches”; lavash or tortilla wraps cut into pieces	Large pre-portioned sandwiches
Dressings made from olive, vegetable or nut oils	Cream-based dressings
Soups and sides made with clear stock base, vegetables, beans and legumes	Soups and sides made with cream base, cheese and/or meat high in saturated fat
Sushi made with fish, vegetables, tofu, avocado	Sushi made with cream cheese, mayo
Condiments: mustard, oil & vinegar, salsa, spreads made with healthy fats, served on the side	Condiments: butter, mayonnaise, sour cream, cheese or cream sauces
For boxed lunches: whole grain & lean protein or vegetable main with fruit or vegetable side(s) and dessert from choices below	Boxed lunches with high carbohydrate or saturated fat mains, sides (pasta, potato, egg & macaroni salads, fried chips) and dessert below
Desserts	
Fresh fruit or fruit salad <i>Served with low-fat dip such as yogurt, if desired</i>	Large portions of baked goods (cake, pie, cookies) with no fruit ingredients
Small/half portions of baked goods (1oz or smaller), make with fruit ingredients, whole grains	Desserts high in fat and calories: ice cream, cake, pie, cheesecake, cookies, pastries
Desserts: small portions of desserts low in fat and calories: fruit, angel food, low-fat yogurt, meringues, sherbet, sorbet, mints, hard candy	

Meetings can be productive and healthy with activity breaks

If you incorporate physical activity breaks into your meetings, you are likely to find that participants have increased energy, attention span and participation, and less fatigue. Taking a few minutes to move can save much time in lost productivity and can get those creative juices flowing.

An active break:

- Is an opportunity to be physically active for a short period during the workday.
- Can be made to fit the needs of your audience. For shorter meetings (under 45 minutes), it can be a 2 minute stand up and stretch or a 5 minute low impact aerobic activity such as marching in place. For longer meetings, the activity could be a 10 minute walk break.
- Is an energizer for the rest of the meeting.

An activity break should:

- Be completely voluntary.
- Allow participants to go at their own pace and remain comfortable and pain-free.
- Be do-able without breaking a sweat.
- Be fun and safe, and not require professional leaders.

Activity Break Ideas:

- Provide pedometers during meetings; have participants walk a minimum number of steps per break. Roughly 2,000 steps is a mile. Map out a walking route around your office.
- Provide handouts showing chair stretches, cubicle yoga, and other exercises that can be done in smaller spaces.
- Give participants the option of sitting on an exercise ball (“fit ball”) during the meeting. The ball can be passed between employees every 10 minutes. Please note: the use of exercise balls for long-term sitting is not recommended. See page 15 for more information.



Support your workplace wellness program with healthy vending choices.

Does your business or organization have a vending machine on site? One simple environmental change to improve the health of your employees and visitors is changing out unhealthy drinks and snacks in the vending machine.

Smart beverage choices include:

- Water
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices
- Juices containing 50% juice that had no added caloric sweeteners
- Sports drinks that are 100 calories or less.

Choose snack items that:

- Are 250 calories or less
- Does not list sugar as a “top 3” ingredient
- Do not contain trans fats (hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils)
- Have 2g or more of fiber and 3g or less of fat per serving
- Are baked (such as chips)

To get started:

- Let your employees/co-workers know why you are changing vending machine options -for their health!
- Gradually phase out sugary sodas and snacks from the machines and replace them with healthier options. Your vending supplier should be able to provide you with a list of food and beverages that meet your new guidelines.



- To help employees (and guests) make a healthy choice, post the nutritional information for the products on the outside of the vending machine.
- If you choose to keep 1 or 2 items from your regular vending machine selection, charge a little more for this option (i.e. \$0.75 for the baked chips but \$1.00 for the regular chips).
- Place the healthier options at eye level or above.

A sample healthy vending machine policy is located on page 15 of this guide.

Healthy Vending Machine Items

Instead of...	Choose...
Pop-Tarts Frosted Strawberry 420 calories / 10g fat/ 40g sugar	Nature Valley Oat & Honey Bar 190 calories/6g fat/12g sugar
Drake's Apple Fruit Pie 440 calories/27g fat/7g saturated fat	Fig Newtons (Fat Free, 2.1oz pack) 180 calories/0g fat/24g sugar
Skittles 250 calories/2.5g fat - all is saturated!	Snyder's Mini Pretzels (20) 110 calories/0g fat/0g saturated fat
Ruffles Original Chips 160 calories/10g fat/3g saturated fat	Baked Lays! Chips 210 calories/3g fat/0g saturated fat/4g fiber
Doritos 250 calories/13g fat/2.5g saturated fat	Smartfood Reduced Fat Popcorn 120 calories/ 5g fat/ 1g saturated fat
3 Musketeers candy bar 260 calories/ 8g fat/ 5g saturated fat/ 40g sugar	Chewy lowfat chocolate chip granola bar 110 calories/2g fat/.5g saturated fat

www.fitnessmagazine.com/recipes/snacks/healthy/vending-machine-snacks/

Other Healthy Vending Machine Options:

- Canned fruit cups
- Dried fruits, such as raisins, apricots, and apples
- Pretzels
- Baked chips
- Lowfat popcorn
- Whole grain crackers
- Lowfat granola bars
- Lowfat, whole grain cereals
- Lowfat, whole grain cereal bars
- Trail mix
- Graham crackers
- Animal crackers
- Plain and salted nuts
- 100% fruit leather
- Fig bars
- Sunflower seeds



Sample Healthy Foods Policy

Below is a sample healthy foods policy for any business/organization/agency/community group that served food and beverage at meetings or events. The Meriden Health Department can help you customize your policy. We will even frame it for you!

_____ (*fill in the name of your worksite*) is concerned about the health and well-being of our employees and clients (*this can be customized to fit your target population*).

Effective _____ (*start date of your choice*), it is the policy of _____ (*name of worksite*) that all meetings and events supported, sponsored by and held at this business will always include opportunities for healthy foods by:

- Purchasing and serving one or more of these healthier items:
 - Fruits and/or vegetables.** This includes fresh, frozen canned or dried fruits and fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables.
 - Low-fat milk and dairy products.** This includes skim or 1% milk, low-fat and fat-free yogurt and cheeses, calcium-fortified soy beverages.
 - Foods made from whole grains.** This includes bagels, cereals, pastas and breads.
 - Water and sparkling water.** No sugar sweetened beverages will be served at meetings or events.
- Identifying healthy eating opportunities.
This includes identification of restaurants, caterers and farmer's markets, where healthy food choices are readily available.
- Providing encouragement from group leadership to enjoy healthy foods.
Our business will strive to promote healthy lifestyles and be a role model for healthy food choices. Good food can taste good and be good for us!

Signature

Title

Name of Business

Date
(Your Logo Here)

(City of Meriden Logo)

Sample Active Breaks Policy

Below is a sample active breaks policy for any business/organization/agency/community group that holds meetings, conferences or other events. The Meriden Health Department can help you customize your policy. We will even frame it for you!

_____ (*fill in the name of your worksite*) is concerned about the health and well-being of our employees and clients (*this can be customized to fit your target population*). Physical activity is associated with many positive health benefits and can prevent or delay the onset of many chronic diseases and short amounts, of 10 minutes or more, can contribute to these benefits.

Effective _____ (*start date of your choice*), it is the policy of _____ (*name of worksite*) that all meetings and events supported, sponsored by and held at this business will always include opportunities for physical activity breaks by:

- Providing 10-minute physical activity breaks during the scheduled event.
- Providing opportunities for physical activity breaks appropriate for all physical activity levels. This could include handouts demonstrating chair stretches and desk yoga, walking maps and pedometers to be used during the event, or group-led activities.
- Proving time before and/or after the event for physical activity and adjusting the schedule when necessary.
- Choosing venues that offer physical activity opportunities for participants.
- Providing encouragement from group leadership for physical activity.

Signature

Title

Name of Business

Date

(Your Logo Here)

(City of Meriden Logo)

Sample Healthy Vending Machines Policy

Below is a sample healthy vending machine policy for those businesses and organizations who have one available for use by employees and guests. The Meriden Health Department can help you customize your policy. We will even frame it for you!

_____ (*fill in the name of your worksite*) is concerned about the health and well-being of our employees and clients (*This can be customized to fit your target population*).

Effective _____ (*start date of your choice*), it is the policy of _____ (*name of worksite*) that all vending machines on the premises will include healthy food.

Beverages in each vending machine shall include:

- Water
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice
- Fruit-based drinks containing at least 50% juice and no added caloric sweeteners
- Sports drinks less than or equal to 100 calories
- All other non-caloric beverages, including diet sodas
- Sizes greater than 12 ounces except for water, with a preference for juices in small size portions (6 ounces)

Snacks/foods shall meet the following criteria:

- Not more than 250 calories
- Not more than 35% calories from fat with the exception of nuts and seeds; snack mixes and other foods
- Not more than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- Does not contain trans fats added during processing (hydrogenated oils and partially hydrogenated oils)
- Not more than 35% total weight from sugar and caloric sweeteners with the exception of fruits and vegetables that have not been processed with added sweeteners or fats

Signature

Title

Name of Business

Date

(Your Logo Here)

(City of Meriden Logo)

Information included in this booklet was summarized from the following websites:

UC Berkeley Guide to Healthy Meetings and Events

<http://uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/pdf/healthmatters/healthymeetings.pdf>

Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina

<http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/>

California 5 a Day - Be Active! Worksite Program

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteFitBusinessKit.aspx>

Workplace Wellness Resources

There is no need to recreate the wheel when it comes to developing your workplace wellness program (or revamping your current one). Here are some useful resources. If you are reading this online, the websites are hyperlinked for your convenience.

Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) - <http://www.welcoa.org/>

CDC Healthy Worksite Initiative (Lean Works!) -

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/index.htm>

CDC StairWELL Program -

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/index.htm>

Information on balance balls:

Gaiam Life:

<http://life.gaiam.com/guides/balanceball-and-ball-chair-faqs-reviews-tips>

American College of Sports Medicine:

<http://www.acsm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=brochures2&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=4740>



And locally.....

Meriden Health Department, Community Health Education office - 203-630-4238

http://www.cityofmeriden.org/CMS/default.asp?CMS_AreaID=51

Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce, Health and Wellness Council - 203-235-7901

<http://www.meridenchamber.com/>