

# BREATHING *matters*

A PUBLICATION OF BREATHE NEW HAMPSHIRE | WINTER 2025

## RESPIRATORY ILLNESS ON THE RISE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire is currently experiencing one of the highest rates of respiratory illnesses this winter. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services has reported alarming trends, with an increase in flu, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), and COVID-19 cases. Some of the latest statistics include:

- Flu cases are up by more than 20% compared to last year.
- RSV hospitalizations have increased by 15%.
- COVID-19 cases are rising, with older adults and individuals with underlying health conditions experiencing more severe symptoms.

What is even more concerning is that these illnesses coincide with a particularly harsh winter, making it even harder for healthcare providers to keep up with the demand. People with pre-existing lung conditions like asthma or COPD are especially vulnerable to the health risks posed by these respiratory illnesses.

### **New Hampshire Faces One of the Highest Rates of Respiratory Illnesses This Winter**

As of January 2025, New Hampshire is seeing one of the highest rates of respiratory illnesses in the region. Health experts warn that the combination of flu, RSV, and COVID-19—along with a surge in seasonal illnesses—is placing a heavy burden on hospitals and healthcare workers across the state. This spike is also contributing to a rise in serious illnesses and complications, particularly among vulnerable populations. Local healthcare systems are under strain, and authorities are urging residents to take extra precautions.

### **How to Stay Healthy This Season**

At Breathe New Hampshire, we are dedicated to helping you stay healthy. Here are some tips to protect yourself and others this winter:

1. **Get Vaccinated:** Make sure to get your flu shot and stay up to date on COVID-19 boosters to help prevent serious illness.
2. **Wash Your Hands:** Clean your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to reduce the spread of germs.
3. **Wear a Mask When Needed:** In crowded spaces or when around sick individuals, wearing a high-quality mask can reduce your risk.
4. **Take Care of Your Body:** Stay healthy by eating nutritious foods, exercising, and ensuring you get enough sleep to support your immune system.

5. **Stay Home if You are Sick:** Rest and recover at home to prevent spreading illness to others.

6. **Keep Your Home Air Clean:** Use air purifiers and keep windows open when possible, to improve indoor air quality.

### **Extra Tips for People with Lung Disease**

If you live with a lung condition, it is crucial to take extra care during this time. Here's how to protect yourself:

- **Stick to Your Treatment Plan:** Follow your doctor's recommendations for medications and management of your condition.
- **Avoid Triggers:** Stay away from cold air, smoke, and allergens that can worsen your symptoms.
- **Watch for Changes:** If you notice an increase in coughing, shortness of breath, or other new symptoms, contact your doctor promptly.
- **Be Ready for Emergencies:** Work with your healthcare provider to create an action plan for worsening symptoms.
- **Stay Connected:** Reach out to support groups or organizations like Breathe New Hampshire for additional guidance and resources.

### **A Reminder for Smokers**

If you are someone who smokes, this is an opportune time to try stopping. And do this with as much help as you can get - your healthcare professional; the NH Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW); your local healthcare facility or health-oriented organizations like the YMCA, your pharmacist. Be sure to use all the resources that you can, especially both - some type of counseling and appropriately full-dosed medications. I would also include quitting vaping and avoiding Secondhand Smoke and Secondhand aerosol." Taking this step can significantly improve your respiratory health and reduce your risk of complications, especially as we navigate this challenging winter.

### **We are Here for You**

At Breathe New Hampshire, we understand the challenges of managing respiratory illnesses, especially during this difficult winter season. We are here to provide information, support, and resources to help you stay healthy. By taking precautions and looking out for one another, we can protect the health of everyone in our community.

For more tips, updates, and information on local health resources, visit Breathe New Hampshire's website and follow us on social media.

# CAFÉ BREATHE: A SUPPORTIVE SPACE FOR THOSE LIVING WITH LUNG DISEASE



Launched in October 2024, Cafe Breathe is a welcoming community space designed for individuals living with lung disease and their caregivers. With a focus on education, resources, and compassionate support, Cafe Breathe provides a safe and understanding environment for everyone affected by lung conditions.

At Cafe Breathe, we aim to connect individuals who share similar experiences, offering a chance to learn more about managing lung disease while receiving emotional support from others who understand the journey. Whether you are seeking helpful information or just a community to lean on, Cafe Breathe is here to guide you.

We meet each month, offering time to connect, learn, and find strength in each other's company. For more details and information about upcoming events, please check our website and look out for flyers about future dates.

**We hope you can join us at Cafe Breathe, March 19th at 10:30 am**  
**Together, we can navigate this journey**  
**with support and understanding.**

# CRUISE & GOLF, SAVE THE DATE!

## EAGER BREATHER'S CRUISE™

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Mount Washington Cruise

## FAIRWAYS FOR AIRWAYS GOLF CLASSIC™

Monday, September 15, 2025

Lake Winnepesaukee Golf Club,  
New Durham, NH

### To learn more:

BreatheNH.org/events,  
call 603-669-2411 or  
email: info@BreatheNH.org

## LATEST UPDATES ON NICOTINE AND THE YOUTH VAPING EPIDEMIC

As of January 2025, the youth vaping epidemic continues to be a pressing concern, with increasing attention from both policymakers and health organizations. Research shows that nicotine use among adolescents has reached alarming levels, with vaping becoming one of the most common forms of tobacco use among teens. This surge in popularity is linked to the availability of flavored e-cigarettes, which often appeal to younger audiences.

In response to this growing epidemic, there have been several updates to policies aimed at curbing youth vaping. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has strengthened regulations around the sale of e-cigarettes, particularly focusing on restricting flavored products and increasing enforcement of age restrictions for online and in-store sales. Additionally, many states and local governments have implemented stricter rules on where vaping is allowed, as well as educational campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of nicotine addiction.

Despite these efforts, the challenge persists, highlighting the need for continued education and prevention initiatives. One of the most effective ways to combat youth vaping is through awareness and knowledge. Our signature education program, Vaping Unveiled, is designed to provide accurate information to youth, parents, and educators about the risks of vaping and how to prevent nicotine addiction.

For more information on Vaping Unveiled and the latest updates, please check our website. Together, we can take a stand against the youth vaping epidemic and protect the health and future of our young people.







# 2025 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## **HB290: Increasing the taxes on cigarettes and electronic cigarettes and establishing a committee to study taxes on tobacco and other nicotine products.**

- HB290 proposes a \$1 increase in cigarette tax and introduces taxation for Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) like Other Tobacco Products (OTPs).
- Breathe NH, along with many of our partner organizations support the bill, however, there is skepticism about its passage, as no tobacco tax increase has been made in over 10 years.

## **SB 80: Consolidating licensing, auditing, and enforcement responsibilities for wholesale and retail e-cigarette sales under the liquor commission.**

- Sponsored by Sen. Lang, Sen. Pearl, and Rep. Almy, SB 80 focuses on wholesalers, manufacturers, and the taxation of tobacco products.
- The bill stems from the SB 433 Study Committee and proposes changes to definitions related to Tobacco Products (TP), TP Manufacturers, and TP Wholesalers.
- **Key updates include:**
  - Adding the term 'nicotine' to the definition of "derived from tobacco."
  - Introduction of definitions for 'Alternative Nicotine Products' and 'synthetic nicotine,' expanding regulatory scope.

### **FDA Announcements and Impact on Nicotine Products**

- Recent FDA announcements have sparked wide-ranging discussions, including:
    - Authorizing but not approving Zyn products.
    - Proposing a reduction of nicotine levels in cigarettes to non-addictive levels, a proposal that has been on the table for more than 10 years.
    - Concerns over the tobacco industry's use of methyl-nicotine (a non-nicotine product), which could circumvent regulations based on FDA drug patent extensions.
    - Reference to addiction research, including work by Tom Shapiro, which challenges some of these FDA moves.
- Additionally, Breathe NH is monitoring bills related to vaping and marijuana, climate change and healthcare.

*Visit the NH General Court website to learn more about current legislation or to find your elected officials:  
[www.gc.nh.gov](http://www.gc.nh.gov)*

## **BAG THE BUTTS™**

Breathe New Hampshire's Bag the Butts™ program raises awareness about cigarette litter and the risks of tobacco use. This Earth Day and during local spring clean-ups, we encourage you to include Bag the Butts™ in your efforts. Collect cigarette butts and spark important conversations on tobacco health risks.

**Request your FREE toolkit today at [info@BreatheNH.org](mailto:info@BreatheNH.org) or call 603.669.2411.**  
**Let us create a cleaner, healthier environment together!**



## **SHARE YOUR STORY!**

We want to hear from you! If you or someone you love is living with or affected by lung disease, share your story with us. Your experiences can inspire and support others who are facing similar challenges. Join our community by submitting your story today to [info@BreatheNH.org](mailto:info@BreatheNH.org).

**Remember BNH in your Will or Trust**

Make a lasting impact on our mission by including Breathe New Hampshire in your estate plans!

With a variety of Planned Giving options, it's easier than ever to support **Breathe New Hampshire** and still support your own budget or long term financial plans!

**GIFTS THAT HELP NOW**

Stock, Donor Advised Funds, Retirement Assets (401k, IRA)

**GIFTS THAT HELP TOMORROW**

Including Breathe New Hampshire in your will or trust, either a percentage, specific amount, or naming as beneficiary of a certain asset

We encourage you to talk to your financial advisor or attorney to determine the best fit for you and your family.

Visit our website at [BreatheNH.org](http://BreatheNH.org) for more information.

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