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## A Low-Sodium Diet for Winter Maintenance at Home

From Claudia Guy, Fitchburg Environmental Engineer



*Speaking of salt, there's a big storm coming this weekend, dropping snow, sleet, and freezing rain across all of southern Wisconsin. Drive safely if you have to go out in your car, and don't forget your winter gear in addition to these tips on salt usage!*

Did you know that once salt is in the environment, it doesn't go away? It degrades our infrastructure and ends up in our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, putting our aquatic life at risk and endangering our freshwater resources. It only takes one teaspoon of salt to permanently pollute five gallons of water to a level that is toxic for freshwater ecosystems.

Consider avoiding salt use entirely by clearing walkways and other areas with a shovel before snow turns to ice. A scraper can be helpful to tackle tougher areas with compacted snow or ice, and a broom can help remove a light dusting of snow. The more snow you remove manually, the less salt you will need to keep sidewalks and driveways safe.

If you use salt, remember a little goes a long way! A coffee mug of salt is enough to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares. A handheld salt spreader like the one shown (at right) can help you control the amount of salt you apply. Spread salt evenly, leaving space between the grains.

When pavement temperatures drop below 15 degrees, salt won't work. Switch to sand for traction or a different ice melter that works at lower



temperatures. After a snow melt, sweep up leftover salt for reuse – that way it won't get buried in the next snowfall or washed away when it rains!

The key is to use the right tool for the job at the right time. We are all in this together; we can work together to protect our waterways and infrastructure. Try making just one change to your winter snow removal routine this year to lessen your salt use, protect our waters and keep sidewalks and driveways safe!

If you hire a contractor, ask if they have gone through a Winter Salt Certification class. If not, encourage them to become certified.

Visit [www.wissaltwise.com](http://www.wissaltwise.com) for more information, and listen to the City of Madison's "[Everyday Engineering](#)" podcast episode on winter salt usage and how your city's streets divisions think about handling winter storms.

### Free Bikes 4 Kidz Winter Collection

From the Wisconsin State Journal, [https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/free-bikes-kidz-hopes-to-give-refurbished-bicycles-to-area/article\\_7c480180-f236-5d1f-bec6-08932448af57.html](https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/free-bikes-kidz-hopes-to-give-refurbished-bicycles-to-area/article_7c480180-f236-5d1f-bec6-08932448af57.html)

If you've got a bike or two taking up space in your garage since your kids went off to college, or perhaps you don't ride that old two-wheeler so often after upgrading to your e-bike for daily commutes, this weekend offers an opportunity for you to reduce some clutter and help others!

Madison's chapter of the Minnesota-based Free Bikes 4 Kids is collecting bicycles throughout Dane County for the third year in a row, to fix up and donate through area community organizations. Bikes are being collected at UnityPoint Health-Meriter locations, including the Fitchburg branch at 2690 Research Park Drive, on Saturday January 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The group's goal this year is to donate 2,000 bikes, after the Wisconsin State Journal reports that this drive resulted in 1,400 bikes donated in 2019.



If you can't make it to Research Park Drive tomorrow, a temporary collection location at East Towne Plaza (2031 Zeier Rd) will be collecting bicycles until March.

Check out <https://www.facebook.com/freebikesmadison> and <https://fb4kmadison.org/> for more information.

**SEE THE HIGHLIGHTS // And we're just getting rolling!**  
Since 2008 FB4K has given away more refurbished bikes annually than any other organization.

<b>GUINNESS WORLD RECORD</b> <i>collected</i> <b>5,512 BIKES</b> IN 4 HOURS	<b>70,000 BIKES</b> given away	<b>156,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS</b> contributed
		<b>USA TODAY</b> <b>MAKE A DIFFERENCE</b> AWARD RECIPIENT
		<b>35,000 PEOPLE</b> VOLUNTEERED

## Fitchburg Recognized as a Bike-Friendly Community Again

From the Fitchburg Star, [http://www.unifiednewsgroup.com/fitchburg\\_star/community/fitchburg-earns-silver-again-for-bike-friendly/article\\_f1a6986a-6af9-5bc2-8297-1a64893c0dc5.html](http://www.unifiednewsgroup.com/fitchburg_star/community/fitchburg-earns-silver-again-for-bike-friendly/article_f1a6986a-6af9-5bc2-8297-1a64893c0dc5.html)

For the third time in 8 years, Fitchburg has been recognized by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle-Friendly Community, renewing its status at the Silver tier. In 2012 Fitchburg was awarded the Bronze designation, advancing to Silver in 2015.

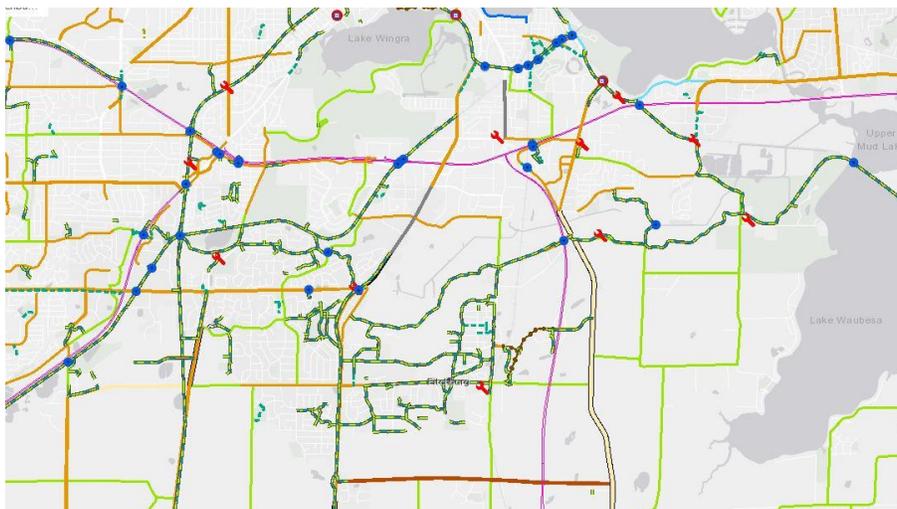
Fitchburg boasts a bicycle network nearly 50% the length of the city's road network, a city committee dedicated to bicycling issues, a bicycle and pedestrian plan implemented through the city's neighborhood planning, an active advocacy group in Bike Fitchburg, and multiple bike-related events throughout the year.

These features demonstrate a commitment not just to supporting cyclists who live in and around the city, but also pushing for increased ridership, developing more expansive infrastructure, comprehensive bike education, and enhanced safety for riders and drivers alike.

Many of Fitchburg's neighbors have demonstrated their commitment to bicycling excellence as well, with Madison moving from Gold up to Platinum status, and four other Dane County cities (as well as Dane County itself) designated Bronze or Silver communities.

Various estimates have been provided for the economic impact of bicycling on the state of Wisconsin, from \$556 million ([Governor Doyle's 2006 Bicycle Coordinating Council](#)) to \$1.9 billion ([2018 University of Wisconsin study](#)), representing not just direct economic activity but also the estimated environmental and physical health benefits associated with bicycling. Even more than just a service to cyclists, this focus on expanding bicycling throughout Fitchburg is a common-sense initiative being implemented repeatedly in cities throughout the country.

Learn more about bicycling in Fitchburg on the [City's website here](#), and click the image below to explore an interactive Dane County bike trail map online.



Map created by a partnership of Madison Area Transportation Planning Board, City of Madison, and Dane County

## Save the Dates for These Upcoming Science and Environment Events!



### Snow Science!

Do you like snow and science? Join us at the Fitchburg Public Library for Snow Science! We'll conduct chilly experiments and learn all about snow and ice.

For kids ages 5-12

**Monday, Jan. 13, 4-5pm**

### STEAM Power

Join us at the Fitchburg Public Library for a STEAM Power storytime and exploration. We will have a short storytime then explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math based on the themes in the books.

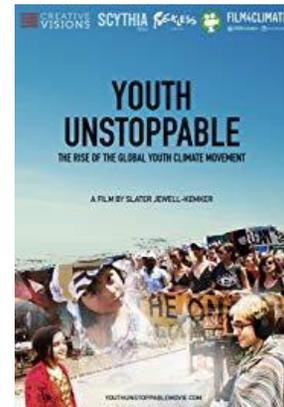
For kids ages 2-5

**Thursday, Jan. 23, 10-11am**

### **Youth Unstoppable: The Rise of the Global Youth Climate Movement** *Free film screening and discussion, hosted by the UW Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies*

Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 7:00-9:15 pm  
Marquee Theater at Union South

*Doors open at 6:30 pm, admission first-come, first-served*



### Share the News

Tell your friends to subscribe to Green Fitchburg on the city website  
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx> > Green Fitchburg

- a. Visit Fitchburg's "Notify Me<sup>®</sup>" web page:  
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx>
- b. Type your email address in the box and select "Sign In"
- c. To receive text messages enter your phone number and select "Save"
- d. Click  (to subscribe/unsubscribe to emails) and/or  (to subscribe/unsubscribe) next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe / unsubscribe (e.g. "Green Fitchburg" is the mailing list for environmentally friendly suggestions or events)

Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at [phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov](mailto:phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov) or 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

