



PUBLIC HEALTH NEWSLETTER

BASTROP COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT



BE RESILIENT!

★ **Bouncing Back—Stronger, Together**

Life throws curveballs. Whether it's a natural disaster, a personal loss, or the daily grind of financial and family stress, we've all faced moments that test our strength. But here's the good news: resilience isn't something you're born with – it's something you can build.

Resilience is more than just "toughing it out." It's a journey of healing, growth, and rediscovery. It's the ability to bounce back – not just to where you were, but to a place of deeper strength and purpose. And science shows us that resilience can be nurtured at any age, through the right tools, support, and mindset.

🧠 **Tools That Help Us Heal**

At Bastrop County Public Health Department, we believe in solutions that work. That's why we along with our Mental Health Coalition members, champion evidence-based approaches to mental health, such as the use of digital tools and apps.

Innovative improvements in technology and "tele-health" services are making mental health support more accessible, especially for youth and rural communities. Digital health services can help bridge the gap in communities where there are not enough providers to adequately serve the population in need, as well as provide a sense of accessibility for those who may have difficulty reaching a physical office when transportation is not available.

📱 **Introducing CredibleMind: Your Mental Wellness Companion**

We know we can't "treat" our way out of the mental health crisis. But we can empower our community with tools that promote prevention, early intervention, and self-care. That's why we're thrilled to introduce CredibleMind – a free, confidential, and easy-to-use online platform designed to support your mental health journey.

BOUNCING BACK (CONT.)

Whether you're looking for help with stress, sleep, anxiety, or simply want to explore ways to feel better,

CredibleMind is your one-stop shop.

- Explore expert-curated articles, videos, podcasts, and apps
- Take personalized assessments to guide your wellness journey
- Discover local resources for treatment, youth programs, and substance abuse support
- Available 24/7, 365 days a year—because healing doesn't follow a schedule

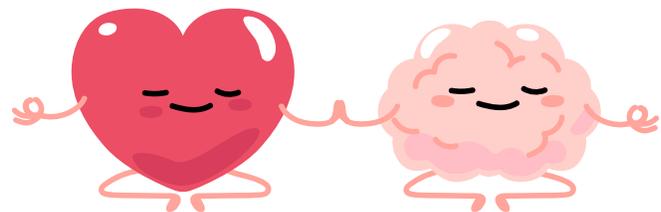
We Want to Hear From You

We invite you, your family, and your community to explore **CredibleMind**. Your feedback matters—it helps us grow and serve you better. You can provide a comment here at public.health@co.bastrop.tx.us

Interested in a demo for your school, workplace, church, or community group? We'd love to show you how **CredibleMind** can make a difference.

👉 **Start your journey today** by taking your first assessment on **CredibleMind** using the link or QR code below. As a thank-you for signing up and completing the mental health check-in, you'll be entered into a drawing for a **\$100 gift card**. Good luck—and more importantly, good health.

: bastropcounty.crediblemind.com



KEEP YOUR HANDS CLEAN!

It's getting to be the time of year

when family and friends gather for autumn events to share good times... and sometimes to share germs. Germs can spread from person to person or from surfaces to people when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch surfaces or objects that have germs on them
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

Each year on October 15, Global

Handwashing Day highlights the importance of handwashing with soap and water, especially during key times throughout the day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed resources to promote handwashing in your community on Global Handwashing Day and throughout the year!

Washing your hands is easy — and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs.



KEEP YOUR HANDS CLEAN! (CONT.)

Studies have shown that handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related sicknesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu.

Follow these five steps every time:

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

For more information on how clean hands save lives, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about/>.



VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS: FALL 2025

Information Overload

Here at the BCPHD, we want to make sure our residents are well informed on the Fall 2025 vaccine guidance for Fall season vaccinations.

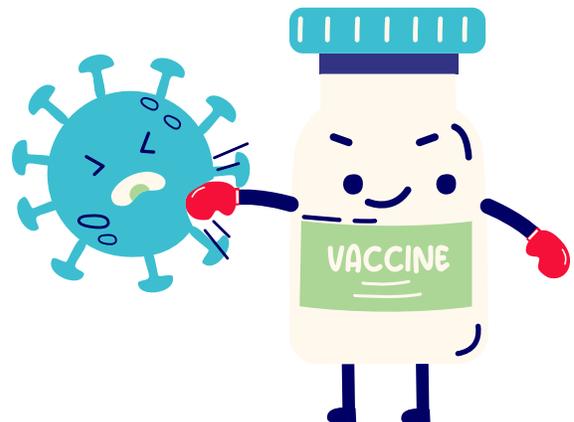
We understand that looking into so many different recommendations can become overwhelming; as such, we wanted to provide our community with an easy-to-read table that explains the options, eligibility, effectiveness, and best timelines to get these seasonal vaccines.

Vaccine Guidance

Provided is a table with a variety of recommendations across healthcare and governmental organizations to give Bastrop County Residents with information on fall flu, RSV, and

COVID vaccine recommendations so you can be empowered to make the best decision for your families.

Please note, that any differences in recommendations should be consulted with your healthcare provider to decide the best decision for you and your family.



VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT.)

	Influenza (Flu) Vaccine	RSV Immunizations	COVID-19 Vaccine
Who is eligible?			
Infants & Children	All children 6 months and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All infants <8 months Children 8-19 months with risk factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children 6-23 months Children 2-17 years old with risk factors or if parents want the vaccine
Pregnancy	All – At any point in pregnancy	32–36 weeks of pregnancy	All – At any point in pregnancy
Adults 18-50	All	None, but if pregnant, see above	All
Adults 50+	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 75+ Adults 50-74 with risk factors Recommended 1 lifetime dose 	All
			
How well do they work?	Reduces risk of going to doctor by 30–60%	Reduces risk of severe disease by 82-86%	Provides 30–60% additional protection against illness & severe disease
What is available?	A shot that targets 3 strains of seasonal flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Children</u>: Monoclonal antibodies nirsevimab or clesrovimab <u>Pregnancy</u>: Pfizer vaccine called ABRYSCO <u>Older Adults</u>: GSK and Pfizer (protein) or Moderna (mRNA) 	Updated vaccine targeting Omicron subvariants (JN.1 or LP.8.1) Options: Moderna (mRNA; 6 months+) & Pfizer (mRNA; 5 year olds+), Novavax (protein; 12 years+)
When should I get it?	October is ideal (protection wanes over a season)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Infants</u>: October-Mar <u>Pregnancy</u>: Sept-Jan <u>Older Adults</u>: Now because protection is durable 	For protection against severe disease you can get it now If you were recently infected, then you can wait at least 6 months due to immunity

HOUSING + HEALTH: COMMUNITY PRIORITIES SURVEY

 **We have been proud** to serve as the lead organization in the Bastrop County Collaborative for Housing + Health (BCCHH), a multi-agency working group that exists to engage Bastrop County residents in designing solutions and policies to encourage the development of more safe and affordable housing as a pathway to a healthier county for all.

 **Over the summer**, we invited residents to share their experiences about the shortage of affordable housing in Bastrop County and how it impacts them, their health, and their families. We also learned about the kind of housing developments that residents would most like to see in Bastrop County.

 **Now, we'd like to hear from you.** This short survey will ask you to rank and comment on different housing characteristics that matter most to you.

It is available in English and Spanish. The survey will be open until October 22 at midnight. Please feel free to share it with other Bastrop County residents - we want to hear from as many of our neighbors as we can! **Access the survey using the QR code or the link below.**

: forms.office.com/g/Nvn2wKMHv0



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORTING FORM

 **Environmental Health Concerns**
Are you concerned about how your health is being affected by your environment? Would you like to report an environmental health concern, but don't know who to contact? Let us help you!

Our Environmental Health Specialist and Epidemiologist have teamed up to create an Environmental Health Reporting Form. If you are experiencing any environmental health concerns, please submit a report through this form, available in both English and Spanish. We are here to serve Bastrop County; Your health matters to us!

: <https://arcs.is/1nmgqNP1>



OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: SENIOR PREPAREDNESS

When emergencies and disasters like flooding, wildland fires, and other disasters occur, those who are prepared are often those who are the most resilient, able to withstand and recover quickly to their new normal.

For older adults, faced with such situations, preparation looks a little different than for others.

In the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) publication "Take Control in 1 2 3: Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults," three preparation steps are presented: Step 1 – Assess Your Needs; Step 2 – Make A Plan; and Step 3 – Engage Your Support Network.

When **ASSESSING YOUR NEEDS**, think about key questions like the following:

- What types of disasters occur in my community, and what resources should I seek in preparing for similar disasters?
- What mobility challenges or disabilities do I need to plan for?
- Have I identified reliable transportation?
- Will I need to transport emergency supplies?
- What assistant aids will I need if displaced for a longer period of time?
- Do I have particular medications and dietary needs?
- Are my caregivers aware of my emergency plans?

Once you have and explored the best answers to your questions, you are ready to **MAKE A PLAN**.

As part of the plan, sign up for automated emergency notifications through <https://warncentraltexas.org/>. Also, make sure emergency notifications are turned on in the settings of your smartphone. You will then be alerted when it is necessary to put your plan into action like during severe weather events, evacuations and shelter-in-place.

Besides having a Go Bag ready in case of evacuation and an Emergency Supply Kit ready if you have to shelter in place, **ENGAGE YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK**.

Make sure at least one person in your support network has a key to your home and knows where all emergency supplies are stored. And plan for your fur babies' emergency needs, too.

TAKE CONTROL NOW, before emergencies and disasters happen, to have a better chance of recovering quickly to what will be a new normal. To learn more, visit <https://www.ready.gov/older-adults>.



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH: TEXAS C-STEP

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month! Breast cancer impacts millions of lives each year which is why regular screenings, such as mammograms, play a vital role in catching breast cancer in its earliest and most treatable stages. Early detection is key, and that's where resources like Texas C-STEP (Cancer Screening, Training, Education, and Prevention) make a life-saving difference.

Texas C-STEP is a program based out of Texas A&M University and is a collaboration between the College of Medicine, School of Public Health, and the College of Nursing. The program just recently received a new grant award from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, CPRIT (PP250064) for three years to be able to continue offering free breast, cervical, liver and colorectal cancer screening services to uninsured women who often face significant barriers to receiving preventive health care. Through partnerships with community clinics, health departments, and local organizations, Texas C-STEP provides access to no-cost breast and cervical cancer screenings and diagnostic services. Texas C-STEP now services Bastrop County!



Texas C-STEP offers a range of services, including:

- Mammograms
- Pap Tests
- Colposcopies
- LEEP (Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure)
- Ultrasound Guided Needle Biopsy
- HPV Vaccinations
- Hepatitis C Testing
- Fecal Immunochemical (FIT) Tests

This Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we invite you to support Texas C-STEP's mission by:

- Spreading the word about available services to family, friends, and neighbors—especially those who may be uninsured or without regular medical care.
- Encouraging women aged 40 and older, or those with a family history of breast cancer, to get screened regularly.
- Participating in awareness events or volunteer opportunities that promote early detection and community health.

If you or someone you know is in need of a free or low-cost breast cancer screening, please contact Texas C-STEP to find out if you qualify. Services are available across multiple counties in Texas, and bilingual assistance is available.

CONTACT TEXAS C-STEP: PHONE: (979) 436-0453 OR 0499 | WEBSITE: [HTTPS://CSTEP.TAMU.EDU/](https://cstep.tamu.edu/) | EMAIL: CSTEP@TAMU.EDU

CONTACT US

The Bastrop County Public Health Department is here to provide support in all aspects of Public Health. As we are a newly established health department, we are not yet functioning at full capacity; Please allow us some time to respond to any comments, questions, or feedback. We look forward to hearing from our community. While you are welcome and encouraged to share this newsletter with your networks (with credit to the BCPHD), we ask that you seek permission to distribute or reproduce this work in other formats. Thank you!

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