

Hello everyone!

It is September and a new school year is underway! Just as we prepare our students with supplies and routines, it's equally important to support their physical and mental health for a successful year. Here are a few reminders:

Physical Health

- **Vaccinations:** Maryland requires DTaP, Polio, MMR, Hepatitis B, and Varicella (chickenpox). Kindergartners need 2 doses of Varicella, while 7th graders need Tdap and Meningitis vaccines.
- **Sports Physicals:** Be sure athletes are cleared and ready to play.
- **Healthy Habits:** Plan balanced meals, encourage regular sleep, and keep active.

Behavioral Health

- **Back to School Jitters:** It's normal for kids to feel a little anxious about going back to school. Listen, support, and normalize their feelings.
- **Open Conversations:** Talk with older kids about alcohol, smoking/vaping, and other drugs. The [Know the Risks](#) website provides information about prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery.
- **Extra Help:** If stress becomes overwhelming, the [LBHA Resource Directory](#) offers support for kids and adults.

Respiratory Virus Season

As fall approaches, so does respiratory virus season. COVID-19 cases have seen a late summer bump with slight increases in hospitalizations, but no more severe than past years. Vaccination remains our best protection. The information below is adapted from the [Caitlin Rivers Force of Infection Newsletter](#). This [A guide to fall 2025 vaccines - by Katelyn Jetelina](#) is also very helpful. I encourage you to read the full newsletter for more detail. Here are the latest updates (as of 9/8/2025):

Influenza

- Recommended for everyone age 6 months and older.
- Earlier isn't always better, the best time to get vaccinated is by late October
- Adults age 65+ should get a high-dose flu vaccine
- Young children may need 2 doses
- A new option, [FluMist](#), is available as a nasal spray for ages 2-49, and can even be delivered to you at home use.

COVID-19

- The vaccine formulation has been updated to respond best to currently circulating strains
- Recommended for adults 65+ and individuals age 18-64 with underlying health conditions.
- American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all children age 6 months to 2 years be vaccinated and children 5-18 with health conditions or if their parents want them to have it.
- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists recommends that pregnant, postpartum, and lactating persons receive the vaccine
- In Maryland the COVID-19 vaccine continues to be available at pharmacies and physician offices and is covered by insurance- [Maryland Protects Access to Vaccines for All Marylanders - Press Releases - News - Office of Governor Wes Moore](#)

RSV

- **Adults:** Recommended for ages 75+ and those 50-74 with health conditions. Only one dose is needed for now.
- **Pregnant persons:** Recommended between 32-36 weeks of pregnancy (if due September – January) to protect newborns
- **Babies:** Infants under 8 months (if unprotected during pregnancy) and high risk 8-19 month-olds should receive RSV antibodies during RSV season (October to March)

In September we're also recognizing two significant health awareness campaigns:

Healthy Aging Month

The population of Montgomery County is aging, gracefully. The older adult population (60+) is projected to grow by more than 50% from ~206k in 2015 to ~316k by 2040. Since 2015, we've been part of the AARP Age-Friendly Network of Communities, focusing on health and wellness, transportation, housing, civic engagement, and elder abuse prevention. Healthy aging is about more than living longer, it's about living well. Staying active, eating nutritious foods, keeping up with preventive care, and staying socially connected all support physical, mental, and emotional well-being as we age. I love these healthy aging tips from [AARP](#).


National Recovery Month

September is also National Recovery Month, a time to remember those lost, celebrate those in recovery, and support families and communities. We continue to see encouraging declines in overdose deaths thanks to prevention, treatment, and widespread naloxone use. You can track local data and find resources, including naloxone training, on the [KnowTheRisks](#) website. We recently recognized International Overdose Awareness Day (Aug 30), a moment to honor those we have lost and lift up those in recovery. Together, we can reduce stigma, support recovery-friendly communities, and ensure everyone has access to the care they need.

Additional September health recognitions

- National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month
- National Suicide Prevention Awareness
- National Sickle Cell Awareness Month- [Maryland Sickle Cell Disease Association](#) has resources
- World Alzheimer's Disease Month
- Blood Cancer Awareness Month

Thanks for your commitment to making our community a healthier, happier place to live, work, learn, and play!



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