

# HEALTH NEWS

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## COMAL COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

### Surround Your Baby With Protection

Pertussis (whooping cough) is an infectious disease that starts like a cold, with a runny nose and cough. As time passes, the cough gets worse and lasts a long time. The Tdap vaccine prevents adults from getting pertussis and passing the disease to babies. Babies cannot receive the pertussis vaccine until they are two months old, leaving them vulnerable to the disease which can be deadly.

Have your family create a “cocoon” of protection around your baby by getting vaccinated with the Tdap vaccine.

The Tdap vaccine is safe for both children and adults. It is recommended that you should receive the vaccine before getting preg-

nant, and for family members at least 2 weeks before the baby’s due date.

Pertussis is highly contagious.

- Up to 90% of people living with someone with pertussis can get the disease.
- 75% of babies who get pertussis get it from a family member who has it, usually a parent or sibling.

Information provided by:

PreventPertussis.com

*For more information about the Tdap vaccine, visit:*

[cdc.gov/vaccinesafety](http://cdc.gov/vaccinesafety)



*Protect Babies.  
Get Vaccinated.*

### Comal County Health Department Offers the Shingles Vaccine

Shingles is caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox. After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays in the body in a dormant state. For reasons that are not fully known, the virus can reactivate years later, causing a painful rash.

**Almost one out of three Americans will develop shingles at some time in their life.**

The only way to reduce the risk of developing shingles and post-herpetic neuralgia, the long-term pain that can follow shingles, is to get vaccinated. Adults age 60 years or older can receive a single dose of the shingles vaccine, called Zostavax®.

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/shingles/>

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*Immunization is one of the most successful public health achievements of the 20th Century.*

[www.ecbt.org](http://www.ecbt.org)



**It is health that is  
real wealth and not  
pieces of gold and  
silver.**

**Mahatma Gandhi**



## Prevent Hepatitis B

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis B is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis B virus. When a person becomes infected, the Hepatitis B virus can stay in the person's body for the rest of his or her life and cause serious liver problems, including liver cancer. Unfortunately, up to

two-thirds of Americans with chronic hepatitis B may be living with the virus and do not know they are infected.

The virus is spread through contact with blood or other body fluids and can be spread from an infected mother to her baby at birth. Hepatitis B can be prevented

with the hepatitis B vaccine.

[www.cdc.gov/Features/ChronicHepatitisB/](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/ChronicHepatitisB/)

For more information about Hepatitis B, visit:

<http://www.hepb.org/patients/>

Or

<http://www.immunize.org/>

## Comal County Health Department is Here to Serve You!

The Office of Public Health offers a variety of services. Appointments are available Monday-Friday. Please call 830-221-1150 to schedule an appointment.

### Vaccinations

We offer vaccinations for both children and adults.

We are a Vaccines for Children and Adult Safety Net Provider.

We accept Medicaid, some CHIP providers, and Traditional Medicare (Part B).

### Epidemiology

We investigate, control, & strive to prevent diseases.

### Women's Health

We offer pregnancy tests.

### STD Counseling

Staff nurse provides confidential STD counseling, by appointment only.

### Emergency

### Preparedness

Plans and prepares response to all hazard events (naturally occurring or man-made) with an emphasis on public health.

## Your Health Department Offers Special Services for Adults

- Blood Pressure Monitoring
- Response to vaccinations and titers
- HIV/AIDS information
- Screening for TB exposure.
- HIV Testing
- Testing for Hepatitis B & C
- Referrals for medical/social needs
- Some routine wellness labs with a physician's script.
- Adult Flu clinics
- Health Fair participation
- Community Education

**Promoting  
Healthy  
Living**

## ImmTrac Specialists at Comal County Public Health



ImmTrac is the Texas immunization registry, a free service from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). It is a secure, confidential registry that electronically stores vaccine information for children, Texas first responders, and registered adults. ImmTrac contains over 73 million immunization records for more than 5.8 million Texas children younger than 18 years of age. This valuable information comes from a variety of sources including private health-care providers, public health clinics, Medicaid claims administrators, the Bureau of Vital Statistics, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clinics. Regardless of the number of sources, each client's immunization information is consolidated into one electronic record.

***A major change was passed in the 2009 legislation that turned ImmTrac into a lifetime registry!***

***This means that ImmTrac will now store immunization records for any Texan of any age!***

## Benefits to Using ImmTrac

Authorized professionals such as doctors, nurses, and public health providers can access clients' vaccination histories. The Registry is a major component of the DSHS initiative to increase vaccination coverage across Texas.

Providers authorized to use ImmTrac can see what immunizations your child has already had, even if they were given in another city or county. So when you come in for shots, your child gets only those that he or she needs.

- This means that your child won't be under-vaccinated and more susceptible to diseases.
- Your child won't be over-vaccinated either, so he or she does not have to go through any more discomfort than is necessary.
- ImmTrac can also print out a shot record you can use to get your child into school or childcare.
- Using ImmTrac, immunization providers can remind you to bring your child in for shots that are due, or to notify you about shots that are overdue.

If you are interested in registering your child for ImmTrac, or if you would like more information, please contact the Comal County ImmTrac Outreach Specialists, Maggie Moreno and Jenna Robinson at (830)221-1150, email them at [morenm@co.comal.tx.us](mailto:morenm@co.comal.tx.us) & [robinj@co.comal.tx.us](mailto:robinj@co.comal.tx.us) or visit <http://www.co.comal.tx.us/Public%20Health/immtrac2/ImmTrac.html> for more information.

## ImmTrac Outreach Specialist Hard at Work in our Community

The Comal County Public Health Department has two ImmTrac Outreach Specialist who work within the community to provide education, technical assistance, and awareness about the ImmTrac program. Jenna Robinson and Maggie Moreno have worked with the school nurses in our community and provided them with the tools to make sure that children in our schools are up to date on all state required vaccines. They also go to local health fairs and educate others in the importance of the ImmTrac program and work hard to increase the number of children and adults in Comal County enrolled in ImmTrac. Jenna and Maggie also work with local healthcare providers to ensure they are updating records within the ImmTrac registry.



## Promoting and Protecting Your Health

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Suite 210  
New Braunfels, TX 78130

Phone: 830-221-1150  
Fax: 830-620-3495  
Web: [www.co.comal.tx.us/health](http://www.co.comal.tx.us/health)



We're in the Commissioners Court Building.



### Our Goals:

- Prevent epidemics and the spread of disease.
- Promote and encourage healthy behaviors.
- Respond to disasters and assist the community in recovery.
- Assure the quality and accessibility of health services.
- Protect against environmental hazards.
- Prevent injuries.

### We're on the Web:

[www.co.comal.tx.us/health](http://www.co.comal.tx.us/health)

## The History of Comal County Health Department by Nanette Burkhardt

Early 1950— we were a City/County Health Department, funded by both City and County. The health department was located on Torrey Street. Darlene Batey was the clerk there with Genevieve Tart, RN, as the County Nurse. At this time, we are unable to ascertain who the County Nurse/s was/were before Genevieve Tart.

In early 1970, the department relocated to Comal Street. Glenny Wagner, RN, replaced Genevieve Tart; followed by Marie Hutnyak, RN; Elizabeth Kleinfelder, RN; Mary Lou Erben, RN. Two clerks worked there: Darlene Batey and Diana Velasquez (\*married name Rios). Alma Garcia replaced Diana Velasquez.

By early 1980, the department relocated to the "old jail" area (torn down in 2011 for Court House restoration) of the County Courthouse, and the

city no longer assisted funding the program. It then became the Comal County Health Department. The County Nurse was Shel McWilliams, RN, with Alma Garcia as the clerk.

The department was moved to its present location at the Landa Building on 178 E. Mill Street in 1990. Shel McWilliams, RN, was the County Nurse with Libby Garcia as the clerk. Around 1992 or 1993 a part-time nurse, Helen Donop, RN, was brought on board to assist Shel McWilliams with the Texas Health Steps Program, and Kathy Saldavar replaced Libby Garcia as clerk.

The department expanded in 1994 to include a part-time immunization nurse, Jeanne Hand, LVN and an immunization part-time clerk, Nanette Burkhardt. In 1995, Amy Ford replaced Kathy Saldavar as clerk, Nanette Burkhardt became Office

Manager, and Maria Smith, LVN replaced Jeanne Hand.

Various nurses and clerical staff have worked for the health department from 1995 to present. Karen Preiss, RN replaced Shel McWilliams as County Nurse and renamed the Comal County Health Department as Comal County Office of Public Health, although no formal action was taken in Commissioner's Court. Gwen Mills, MNsc RN, replaced Karen Preiss.

In 2011, after 17 years of service, Nanette Burkhardt retired as Executive Office Manager and Immunization Program Manager. Aimee Lawrence took her place as the second Manager in the history of Comal County Public Health.