



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

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COVID-19 information, assistance, and resources

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COVID-19 is highly contagious

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a highly contagious respiratory illness. Older adults and people with underlying medical conditions have higher risks for COVID-19 complications. You may protect yourself and your community by:

- Avoiding exposure by staying at least 6 feet away from other people
- Avoid gatherings of more than a few people
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Isolate yourself from everyone if you have symptoms such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze to avoid the spread of germs
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and frequently used areas
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Wear a protective mask

News about COVID-19 changes every day. Information is available from reputable sources, such as:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>)
- The National Institutes of Health (<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>)
- The World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>)

How to make a face mask

If you do not have a face mask, you can make your own. Please watch the following YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvJgf4&feature=youtu.be>)



[outu.be](https://www.cdc.gov)) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams shares easy instructions for making your own mask out of household materials.

Staying safe while grocery shopping

During COVID-19, you may still need to take care of your necessities. Here are some tips for grocery shopping safely during COVID-19.



- Call your grocery store or check their website for information about early shopping times for older adults. Many stores are setting specific store hours aside for seniors, so they can shop in a less crowded environment.
- Wear a face mask and separate yourself by at least 6 feet from other shoppers. Stand at least 6 feet away from other shoppers waiting in checkout lines.
- Bring hand sanitizer to use before and after you handle the shopping cart.
- Avoid using reusable shopping bags during the pandemic. Please use this environmentally friendly option once the pandemic has ended!
- Wipe down your products with a disinfectant once you are home as an extra precaution.

Remember, it is not safe to ingest disinfectants of any kind. Consuming disinfectants or cleaning chemicals can make you very sick because these products are toxic. It is fine to wipe down the external packaging of your groceries (like boxes and bags) with a cleaning wipe. However, it is not safe to wash the produce you will be eating with disinfectants or cleaning chemicals. To safely wash your produce, rinse it under water. There is no need to use soap.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has created a webpage all about cleaning produce. To see the FDA's webpage on this topic, visit <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/7-tips-cleaning-fruits-vegetables>.

Healthy habits – Handwashing

Washing your hands is one of the best ways to keep yourself germ-free. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) share tips for washing your hands at <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>.

Wash your hands

The CDC shares these tips for proper hand washing:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water, 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 you do not have access to soap and water right away, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If you are unsure how much alcohol is in your hand sanitizer, check the label on the bottle.

The CDC released an informative 2-minute video that explains the importance of hand washing during COVID-19. It demonstrates proper hand washing techniques. To watch, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d914EnpU4Fo&feature=youtu.be>.

Food banks



If COVID-19 has left you struggling to put food on the table, please refer to the following resources. Many volunteers and food banks are serving individuals who are hungry during COVID-19.

The *Maryland Food Bank* strives to feed families affected by food insecurity. During COVID-19, several food distribution sites are available to individuals in need of assistance.

- The Pantry on the Go Program offers a drive-thru format for food distribution. For more information about the Pantry on the Go Program, visit <https://mdfoodbank.org/hunger-in-maryland/approach/programs/pantry-on-the-go/>.
- Food distribution hubs have been added in several Baltimore communities.
- To find a MFB food distribution site, please visit <https://mdfoodbank.maps.arcgis.com/apps/>

webappviewer/index.html?id=2fee6411f4bc48838074-2ffabb16291e. This website has an interactive food map. If you type in your zip code, you will be directed to food banks in your area.



The Baltimore City local government has created a COVID-19 *Emergency Food Insecurity Response* to promote food access during the pandemic. This response effort is focused on providing food to children and families, older adults, and food insecure residents. For more information about this response effort, please visit <https://coronavirus.baltimore-city.gov/food-distribution-sites>.

- Food distribution sites can be viewed at <https://baltimore.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Nearby/index.html?appid=32ce54bc99e746f5bc4c386208cee3e7>. This site is updated frequently.
- Adults older than 60 who are unable to leave their homes can call Maryland Access Point (MAP) at 410-396-CARE for information about eligibility for home-delivered meals or groceries.

How to check the status of your stimulus payment

The IRS has created a webpage to help you understand the Economic Impact Payment (also known as stimulus payments). Many people are wondering when these payments will arrive. People are also wondering if they will receive a paper check, or if they will receive direct deposit.

To check the status of your stimulus payment, please visit <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments>.

To check if you are eligible for a stimulus payment, please visit the Economic Impact Payment Information Center: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center>.

Financial Resources

Financial strain is very stressful, and stress can negatively impact your health. Stress can lead to changes in sleep, appetite, and mood. If you or someone you know is struggling financially as a result of COVID-19, the CASH Campaign of Maryland may be able to help.

Please visit the following website to learn more about the CASH Campaign of Maryland, and how they can help you during COVID-19: <https://www.mdcashacademy.org/COVID19/>.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland's website shares links for assistance in the following categories:

- Help with housing: <https://www.mdcashacademy.org/page-1862808>
- Help with food: <https://www.mdcashacademy.org/COVID>
- Help replacing income: <https://www.mdcashacademy.org/COVID-19-Income-Help>
- Help with utilities: <https://www.mdcashacademy.org/COVID-19-Utilities-Help>
- Help avoiding scams: <https://mdcashacademy.org/COVID-19-Scams-Help>
- Help with legal issues: <https://www.mdcashacademy.org/Legal-Resources>

The CASH Campaign of Maryland is an excellent resource to use even after the pandemic. They offer financial education and coaching year-round, and financial education classes are free!

Outdoor safety tips during COVID-19

Stay home so you can avoid contact with others because you don't know who was exposed to the disease. Spending time outside is good for your physical and mental health. Exercise is important and can help you cope with stress and negative emotions. With gyms and fitness centers are closed, many people go outside for physical activity. Please enjoy the outdoors responsibly. If you decide to spend time outside, please consider these precautions to keep yourself healthy:

- Keep a safe distance from others by staying at least 6 feet away
- Avoid large groups
- Visit parks or outdoor areas during off-times when they are less likely to be crowded
- Wash your hands before & after your outdoor activity
- Bring hand sanitizer with you
- Note that during COVID-19, many public restrooms at parks may be closed. Use the restroom before you visit the park.
- If you feel sick, please stay home!

Mental health resources

COVID-19 has caused many people to feel stressed, isolated, depressed, anxious, and scared. Pandemics create uncertainty that can be difficult to handle when you are unable to leave the house to visit your support system or seek professional help.

Here are some ways you can care for your mental health during COVID-19:

- Avoid alcohol or illegal drugs as coping mechanisms. Alcohol and illegal drugs can make your symptoms significantly worse.
- Maintain some of your daily routines, such as regular bedtime and waking time. Keeping a routine helps you maintain a sense of normalcy during an uncertain time.
- Stay active! Exercise is a known mood-booster and can also help strengthen your immune system.
- Connect with your loved ones from a safe distance. Now is a great time to reconnect with friends and family you have been meaning to call for a long time. While you are unable to leave your home, contacting your loved ones by phone can help you fight off feelings of loneliness and isolation.

If you are thinking about harming yourself or suicide, please call any of the following numbers for assistance:

- 911
- 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
- 24/7 Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741
- Your psychiatrist, mental health therapist, or primary care physician

Home is not a safe place for everyone. If you are a victim or survivor of domestic abuse in need of support during COVID-19, the National Domestic Violence Hotline has trained professionals who can help you 24/7. Resources provided by the hotline include crisis intervention, safety planning, and legal help.

To reach the hotline, please use the following options:

- Call 1-800-799-SAFE (800-799-7233)
- Text LOVEIS to 22522
- Online Chat at <https://www.thehotline.org/>

Miscellaneous resources

The Baltimore City Council has compiled a comprehensive resource guide for residents. This guide includes information about essential resources, transportation, utilities and services, and city and state agencies/aid.

Please visit the following website to learn more: <http://www.baltimorecitycouncil.com/content/council-presidents-covid-19-resources>.

Balancing enjoying nature with COVID-19 risk

During COVID-19, please enjoy the outdoors responsibly. If you decide to spend time outside, please consider these precautions to keep yourself healthy:

- Keep a safe distance from others by staying at least 6 feet away
- Avoid large groups
- Visit parks or outdoor areas during off-times, when they are less likely to be crowded

- Wash your hands before and after your outdoor activity
- Bring hand sanitizer with you
- Note that during COVID-19, many public restrooms at parks may be closed. Be prepared and use the restroom before you visit the park.
- If you feel sick, please stay home!
- Some public parks may be temporarily closed to due to social distancing guidelines.



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Newsletter for the HANDLS community

The purpose of this study is to learn about changes in health over time. Using our medical research vehicles, we want to study as many people with different backgrounds as we can. We want this study to help us understand healthy aging by examining the influences of different backgrounds on changes in health over time. The information we gather will help improve health and prevent disabilities. Our goal is to gather information to improve health and prevent disabilities for people of all backgrounds, particularly in minority communities and communities with limited resources.

For information about our study call 877-677-9538 or visit our website <https://handls.nih.gov>.