



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

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Vaccine Update

Who is eligible for a vaccine?

All Marylanders 16+ are eligible to get the Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. Recently, Pfizer was approved for children between 12 and 15 years old.

Which vaccines are available in Maryland?

Three COVID-19 vaccines can be used in this emergency: Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson.

- The Pfizer vaccine has 2 doses, that you get 3 weeks apart. This vaccine prevents serious COVID-19 illness 95% of the time. The studies in children between 12 and 15 years old found that this shot prevented COVID-19 100% of the time.
- The Moderna vaccine has 2 doses, that you get 4 weeks apart. It prevents COVID-19 serious illness 94% of the time.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has 1 dose and is 85% effective at preventing serious illness.

We are here to help. If you have questions about how the vaccine works, please call 443-431-0909 to speak with us about the COVID vaccines. If you prefer, you may email us at handls@mail.nih.gov.

How is Johnson & Johnson different from the other vaccines?

The vaccines that we have now are made in 2 different ways. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are *mRNA vaccines*. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a *viral vector vaccine*. All three of these COVID-19 vaccines protect against being put in the hospital or dying from COVID-19.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines contain a small piece of our cell’s instruction book called *mRNA*. This small piece of mRNA makes the COVID-19 spike protein. When you get the shot, the *mRNA* gives your cells the instructions to make the coronavirus spike protein. After “reading” the mRNA, your white blood cells will recognize the

COVID-19 virus if you run into it and be ready to fight the virus and make sure you do not get sick. .

Johnson & Johnson is a *viral vector vaccine*. To make the vaccine, Johnson & Johnson changed a harmless virus. They put the COVID-19 spike protein gene into this virus. When you get the shot, the harmless virus gives your cells instructions for making the spike protein. Then your body destroys that virus. After your body makes the spike protein, your white blood cells “see” the COVID-19 virus protein and makes antibodies. These antibodies fight the COVID-19 virus if you



run into it. . For more information about how the Johnson & Johnson vaccine works, visit <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/health/johnson-johnson-covid-19-vaccine.html>.

Is the Johnson & Johnson vaccine safe?

In early April, U.S. doctors for a short time stopped using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. This was because 6 women younger than 50 years old developed a very rare type of blood clot after they got their shot. Doctors studied this but found that the Johnson & Johnson shot was safe for most people.

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If you already received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you are protected against COVID-19. You should not worry unless you have side effects like difficulty breathing, swollen legs, stomach pain, or severe headaches about 1-3 weeks after your vaccine. If you experience these side effects, contact a medical provider right away.

What if I'm worried about vaccine side effects?

Sometimes people do not want to get a vaccine because of possible side effects. Not everyone has side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Side effects linked to COVID-19 vaccines include pain in your arm where the shot goes in, tiredness, headaches, chills, muscle aches, or joint pain. If you have side effects, they usually go away within a day or so. Side effects are normal signs that your body is getting ready to fight the virus. Many people have no side effects.

Where can I get a COVID-19 test?

Visit the following website <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/symptoms-testing> and enter your zip code to find COVID-19 testing sites near you. If you do not have internet access, call 211.

Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines are offered at many places: doctors' offices, pharmacies (CVS, Rite-Aid, etc.), hospitals, and mass vaccination sites. Kids over 12 years old can get the Pfizer vaccine at any of these places.

Maryland's mass vaccination sites include:

- Six Flags America Theme Park
- Regency Furniture Stadium (Blue Crabs Stadium)
- Wicomico Civic Center
- Hagerstown Premium Outlets
- M&T Bank Stadium
- Greenbelt Washington Metro Station
- Maryland State Fairgrounds
- Montgomery College (Germantown Campus)
- Frederick Community College
- Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium
- Leidos Field at Ripken Ironbirds Stadium
- The Mall in Columbia

To register for a vaccine at a mass vaccination site, visit <https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/vaccine/> or call 1-855-MD-GOVAX (855-634-6829).

What if I don't want to go to a mass vaccination site?

The State of Maryland gives vaccines to mass vaccination sites and vaccine providers such as hospitals, pharmacies, primary care physicians, and community health centers. More than 350 providers are listed at www.covidvax.maryland.gov.

Visit this map to see where vaccines are being offered in your area: <https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/nearby/index.html?appid=0dbf-b100676346ed9758be319ab3f40c>.



Can I get a walk-up or same-day vaccine appointment?

It is possible to register and receive a vaccine on the same day, at some locations.

Since May 1st, Maryland residents no longer need to pre-register for a COVID-19 vaccine at state mass vaccination sites. You can book an appointment at a mass vaccination site by calling 855-MD-GOVAX (855-634-6829) or by visiting www.covidvax.maryland.gov.

Some mass vaccination sites allow walk-up appointments. Appointments are not required for walk-up slots, but people should be prepared to wait in line for a vaccine.

Mass vaccination sites in Baltimore City that offer walk-up appointments:

M&T Bank Stadium: Walk-up vaccination slots are available daily from 9am-4pm. The only exception to this schedule is when the Orioles play a day game. Walk-up vaccinations are available from 9am-12pm during Orioles day games. Free parking for individuals seeking vaccines can be found in Lot B. The Orioles schedule can be found here: <https://www.mlb.com/orioles/schedule/2021-05>. For information about walk-up appointments at M&T Bank Stadium, visit

<https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/covid-vaccine/get-vaccine/mtb-stadium>.

Baltimore Convention Center: Walk-up vaccine slots are available Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10am-12pm. This location has approximately 200 walk-up vaccination slots available each day it is open. For information about walk-up appointments at the Baltimore Convention Center, visit <https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/covid-vaccine/get-vaccine/baltimore-convention-center-vaccine>.

There is a “Maryland Vaccine Hunters” group on Facebook with up-to-date vaccine information. This group often posts when vaccines are available for last-minute or same-day appointments. Finally, if you prefer to receive a vaccine from your physician or pharmacy, you can call the office to see if they have any available doses for a same-day appointment.

What resources are available to me by phone?

Many people do not use the internet, or do not have computers or smartphones. It is possible to schedule a vaccine appointment without using the internet.

- Call the Maryland Department of Health’s Vaccine Support Center at 1-855-MD-GOVAX (1-855-634-6829) for a vaccine appointment. Operators monitor this phone number daily from 7am-10pm.
- Contact the Maryland Department of Health Call Center at 877-319-1525.
- Call a mass vaccination site directly. Below are numbers for Baltimore City mass vaccination sites:
 - M&T Bank Stadium: 410-779-9507
 - Baltimore Convention Center: 410-649-6200
- Text MDReady to 898-211 to sign up for text alerts to learn when mass vaccination sites have available appointments.
- Call your pharmacy directly. Don’t know the number? Look at one of your prescription bottles; your pharmacy’s number should be on the label.
- Call your medical provider directly.

What if I need a ride to a vaccination appointment?

Until July 4th, Lyft and Uber are offering free or discounted rides to COVID-19 vaccination sites. Lyft will offer a “ride code” to cover up to \$15 of each trip to or from a vaccination site. To learn about Lyft’s Vaccine Access Program, visit <https://www.lyft.com/vaccine-access>.

From May 24 through July 4, Uber is offering up to 4 free rides (up to \$25 each) to and from your vaccina-

tion appointments. To use Uber’s offer, open the app and tap “Vaccine,” then “Get your free ride.” Once you find your vaccination location, you can select your ride for free. To learn about Uber’s program, visit <https://www.uber.com/us/en/coronavirus/>.

You can get to many vaccination sites in the Baltimore region by local bus, metro, or light rail through MDOT MTA. To find the best transit option, use the MDOT MTA trip planner tool at <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/trip-planner>. The following website lists several vaccination locations accessible by MDOT MTA transit: <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/coronavirus>.

If you are having trouble finding a nearby place for a COVID-19 vaccine, please call the Maryland Health Department (877-319-1525) to ask about GoVAX mobile vaccine clinics. The Vaccine Equity Task Force is making sure that COVID-19 vaccines are taken to all parts of Maryland like Marylanders who live in rural or areas with limited resources. An operator can answer your questions about getting an appointment at a GoVAX mobile clinic.

Vaccine scams

To avoid vaccine scams, make sure you are staying up-to-date on COVID-19 from trusted sources in Maryland:

- Text alerts: text MdReady to 211
- COVID-19 Information and resources (MD): <https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/>
- COVID-19 data dashboards (MD): <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
- Follow the Maryland Department of Health on social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.

For more information...

To read our previous newsletter on mRNA vaccines for protection against COVID-19, please visit <https://handls.nih.gov/news/2021-1.pdf>.

Do you need health insurance?

Open enrollment through Maryland Health Connection has been extended until August 15, 2021. This means that you can enroll in a health plan and get coverage until the end of 2021. Please visit <https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/> or call the Consumer Support Center at 1-855-642-8572 for more information. You may also use this website or phone number to apply for or renew your Medicaid coverage.

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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>.