

Spring 2021

Green Ridge House Gazette

Maryland's New Roadmap to Recovery

In early April the state of Maryland accelerated its vaccine eligibility timeline and entered Phase 3 of its distribution schedule. **Mass vaccination sites will open to anyone 16 or older as of April 6**, almost a month ahead of the original scheduled date of April 27, and all vaccine providers will be open to anyone 16 or older as of April 12. People who became eligible in earlier phases, including those 65 and older or those 16 and older with medical conditions that increase Covid19 risk, are still prioritized for appointments.

In time for this accelerated schedule, three new mass vaccination sites have just opened, with several more due to open in coming weeks. **One new vaccination site is the Greenbelt Metro Station, which opened on April 7.** Anyone 16 or older who is not yet vaccinated is encouraged to preregister.

As more people are vaccinated, Maryland has also lifted capacity limits on indoor and outdoor businesses, including restaurants, retail, fitness centers, and religious facilities. Large venues such as theaters or concert and sporting venues can operate at 50% capacity. However, the statewide masking order remains in place. Masks must be worn at any public indoor facility and in outdoor public areas when it is not possible to maintain a six foot physical distance.

Even as the state reopens, the mask mandate is still in effect, and physical distancing and other safety protocols will remain in place.



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What Can I Do Once I've Been Vaccinated?

All available Covid19 vaccines have been confirmed by the CDC to be safe and effective. The vaccines protect you in two ways: they make it much less likely for you to catch Covid19, and they prevent you from becoming seriously ill or having complications on the off chance that you do catch it. For seniors, the second point is especially important.

However, scientists are still researching how well the Covid19 vaccines can prevent you from carrying or spreading the disease to unvaccinated people. Research is also being done on exactly how long the vaccines last and how effective they are against new variants of the virus that causes the disease. As we know, some vaccines, like the measles vaccine, last a lifetime. Others, like the flu vaccine, require a new shot every year to stay effective, largely due to the many variants of the virus.

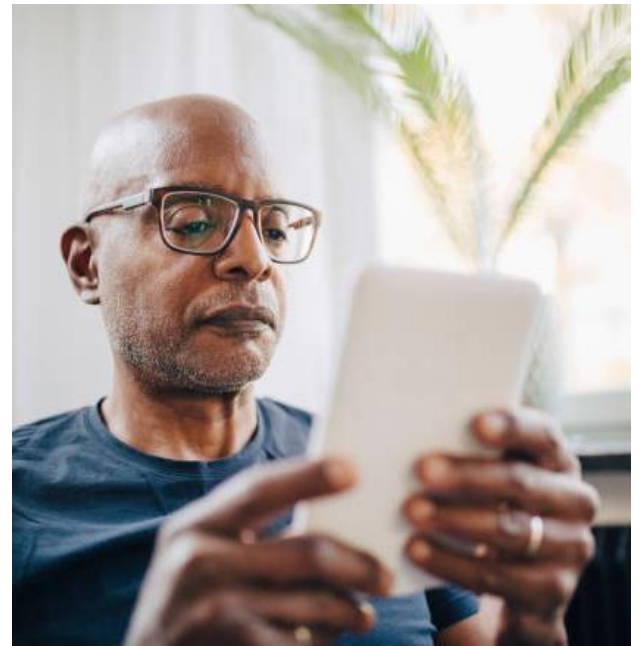
This is why the CDC recommends you continue taking precautions in public once you've been fully vaccinated. Because it takes about two weeks for a vaccine to take effect, **you are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or two weeks after your single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. After this, you should still wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart from others, and avoid crowds or poorly ventilated spaces**, but there are some things you can do with less restrictions. Below are CDC recommendations for what you can and cannot do:

Visit inside a home or private setting without a mask with other fully vaccinated people of any age	
Visit inside a home or private setting without a mask with one household of unvaccinated people who are not at risk for severe illness	
Travel domestically without a pre- or post-travel test	
Travel domestically without quarantining after travel	
Travel internationally without a pre-travel test depending on destination	
Travel internationally without quarantining after travel	
Visit indoors, without a mask, with people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19	
Attend medium or large gatherings	

The good news: evidence so far suggests that the vaccines should remain effective over time, and that the risk of a vaccinated person spreading Covid19 is very low. If any of the Covid19 vaccines do require booster shots, they will be easy to produce due to the new technology that was used to create the original vaccines.

There is a lot of misleading and conflicting information on the internet about Covid19 and other health related topics. How do you determine what information is accurate and what is not? The National Institutes of Health recommends asking five questions when viewing health information to determine its credibility.

1. Who runs or created the site or app? Can you trust them?
2. What is the site or app promising or offering? Do its claims seem too good to be true?
3. When was its information written or reviewed? Is it up-to-date?
4. Where does the information come from? Is it based on scientific research?
5. Why does the site or app exist? Is it selling something?



After asking these questions you will have a better idea of the website's credibility. If you are still unsure bring up the topic to your primary care physician or another health care provider. Together, you can make shared, well-informed decisions.

Here is a list of credible health sources to start with:

- MyHealthFinder (<https://health.gov/myhealthfinder>) - The MyHealthFinder tool is maintained by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in collaboration with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. It is sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- PubMed (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>) - A service of the National Library of Medicine, PubMed contains publication information and brief summaries of articles from scientific and medical journals.
- MedlinePlus (<https://www.medlineplus.gov>) - To provide resources that help answer health questions, MedlinePlus (a service of the National Library of Medicine) brings together authoritative information from the National Institutes of Health as well as other Government agencies and health-related organizations.
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (1-888-463-6332 | <https://www.fda.gov>) - The FDA oversees the safety of many products, such as foods, medicines, dietary supplements, medical devices, and cosmetics.

Next Steps to Open Green Ridge House

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April: A vaccine clinic for Moderna second doses will be taking place in GRH on April 19. Please note that this vaccine clinic is only for residents who received a first dose at the earlier clinic on March 22. These residents will receive further details and notifications.

Following the clinic, a vaccination status survey will be given to all residents. We ask that everyone complete this survey so we have an estimate of how many people in the building have been or will be vaccinated. This will help us plan our reopening—the more people answer, the better! **Your answers will be anonymous.**

May: The City of Greenbelt, GRH staff, the Service Coordinator will be planning for reopening based on the vaccination status survey's results.

June and beyond: We are optimistic about health screenings, Arts for the Aging, and some other activities opening on a limited basis sometime in the summer!

Ongoing Events at Green Ridge House

Service Coordinator Office Hours: The Service Coordinator, Flora, will be in her office during regular 9 AM – 5 PM hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. She is also available by phone and email during regular hours Monday to Friday. Call or text **301-412-2480** or email fli@greenbeltmd.gov if you need assistance or would like to set an appointment during in-person office hours. **Further details and a calendar are posted on the Service Coordinator Office door. You must wear a mask if you come in for in-person office hours.**

Giant Grocery Distribution: Every Monday only in the Dining Room starting at 1 PM. If you are interested in picking up items, you must sign up for a time slot if you have not already. See more guidelines posted in the Terrace level hallway. To sign up please call, text, or email Flora.

Monthly Produce Delivery: Every third Thursday of the month. Done in conjunction with produce distributions at the Greenbelt Community Center. Residents will get their produce delivered to their doors instead of having to drive down to the GCC. To sign up please call, text, or email Flora.

Congregate Meal Program: Every Friday in the Dining Room. Please contact Ms. Marvel Brown at **301-474-1135** for more details.

All other regular activities remain canceled until further notice.