

Autumn 2022 Green Ridge House Gazette

Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids Soon Available

On August 16, 2022 the Food and Drug Administration ruled to establish a category of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids that can be sold without a prescription, hearing exam, or fitting appointment. **This is expected to take effect in October, making OTC hearing aids available in stores very soon.**

OTC hearing aids are intended to help adults with mild to moderate hearing loss, and must be able to be customized or controlled so that users can adjust for volume and frequency changes without help from a hearing health professional. However, they are not intended for people with severe hearing loss who have great difficulty communicating. While OTC hearing aids do not require a prescription, the FDA recommends that you consult with a doctor before buying to be sure whether an OTC hearing aid is what you need.

OTC hearing aids are expected to be more affordable than prescription hearing aids. Federal officials estimate that people can save up to \$3000 compared to the average price of getting prescription hearing aids, a process which includes costly hearing exams and fittings that are often not covered by insurance.

See page 2 for differences between OTC and prescription hearing aids.



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| | OTC hearing aids | Prescription hearing aids |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Regulated by FDA | Yes | Yes |
| Levels of hearing loss covered | Mild to moderate | Mild, moderate, severe, and profound |
| Average price | \$1600* | \$4600 |
| Hearing exam required? | No | Yes |
| Prescription required? | No | Yes |
| Fitting appointment required? | No | Yes |
| Purchasing options | In retail stores, online, and in some hearing care clinics | Hearing care clinics |

Nearly a quarter of Americans between 65 to 74 years old have hearing loss that affects their daily life. The number goes up to half of all Americans over the age of 75, according to the National Institute on Deafness. If you are wondering if OTC hearing aids can help you, **here are some signs of mild to moderate hearing loss:**

- You frequently ask people to repeat themselves.
- You often think others are mumbling or not speaking clearly.
- You have trouble understanding when someone whispers to you or when more than one person speaks at once.
- You often misunderstand what people say and respond incorrectly.
- You've started changing your behavior to help yourself hear things, such as turning up the volume on your TV or asking friends to speak up around you.

Keep in mind that OTC hearing aids are not designed to treat more severe hearing loss or hearing loss related to an injury or other medical condition. See your doctor if you have symptoms such as pain, ringing or buzzing, or a plugged feeling in the ear, vertigo or dizziness, fluid or blood coming from the ear, or sudden or fluctuating hearing loss.

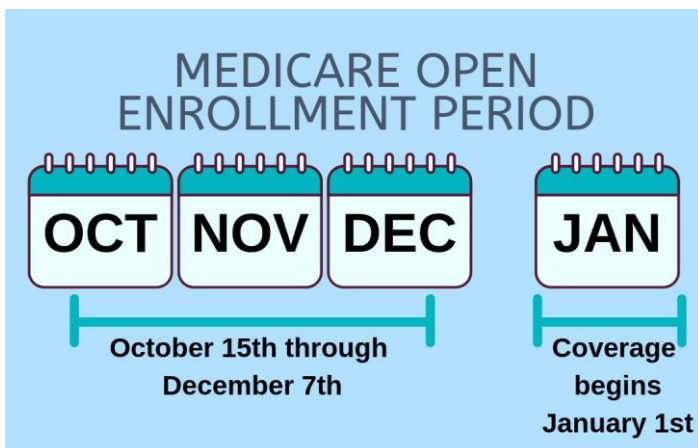
Medicare Open Enrollment begins October 15

Medicare Open Enrollment is the annual period when current Medicare users can review their Medicare Part D prescription drug plan or Medicare Advantage plan and compare it to other plans on the market to make sure they are getting the best value. You can join, drop, or switch to a Part D prescription drug plan or Medicare Advantage plan that will start January 2023.

The Service Coordinator will be taking appointments for Part D plan check-ups starting mid-October. **More details and sign-up sheets will be in the lobby. If you sign up you will need to provide information on your prescription drugs and current Medicare plans.**

Event: Medicare Presentation

Unsure about Medicare Open Enrollment? Confused about different types of Medicare or interested in Medicare Advantage? **Join us for a Medicare options presentation by Mark Gottlieb, insurance agent, from Thursday, October 6 from 2 PM – 3 PM in the Community Room.**



Vaccine Clinics in the City of Greenbelt

Tuesday, October 4
10 AM – 2 PM

Greenbelt Community Center
(Ground Floor East)
15 Crescent Rd
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Thursday, October 6
12 PM – 7 PM

Springhill Lake Recreation
Center (Gymnasium)
6101 Cherrywood Ln
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Flu and Covid19 vaccines/boosters provided!

To pre-register, go to <https://marylandvax.org/>

Click on **Flu Clinics** and then type the location you would prefer into **Search by Name of Location:** Greenbelt Community Center or Springhill Lake Recreation Center. Complete the application and bring your Covid19 vaccine card.

Senior Brown Bag registration is open!

The Senior Brown bag program offers eligible older adults a **FREE** bag of nutritious, nonperishable food items once a month. Bags are currently delivered to participants on the third Tuesday of each month.

To be eligible for the Senior Brown Bag program, you must be at least 60 years old and either receive any of the following benefits: SNAP (Food Stamps), Medical Assistance, Energy Assistance, TANF, or Unemployment benefits, **OR** be within the income eligibility requirements shown in the chart below.

If you are interested in joining the Brown Bag program, contact the Service Coordinator to register by Friday, October 28.

| <i>Household Size</i> | <i>Annual Income</i> | <i>Monthly Income</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | \$20,385 | \$1,699 |
| 2 | \$27,465 | \$2,289 |

Ongoing Events at Green Ridge House

Grocery Distribution: Mondays from 1 PM – 1:30 PM in the Dining Room, when available.

Monthly Produce Delivery: Every third Thursday of the month.

Congregate Meal Program: Fridays in the Dining Room. Contact Ms. Marvel Brown at **301-474-1135** for details.

Chair Yoga Class: Thursdays from 10 AM – 11 AM in the Community Room.

Wii Interactive Games: Thursdays from 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM in the Community Room.

Glenda's Chat and Chew: Every fourth Tuesday of the month at 2:30 PM in the Community Room.

Arts for the Aging: Every fourth Wednesday of the month at 2 PM in the Community Room.

NEW! Strong Seniors Gym Class: Tuesdays from 11 AM – 12 PM in the Community Room. Come get your body moving! Started September 13.

The Service Coordinator will have an assistant starting mid-October!

Service Coordinator hours are still 9 AM – 5 PM, Mondays to Thursdays in the office and Fridays by phone. Assistant hours will be 9 AM – 2 PM.

