



Autumn 2023

Green Ridge House Gazette

Free Covid19 Tests Available Again

The federal government started offering free Covid19 test kits through the mail again on September 25, 2023. **Each household can place one order of four test kits** for home delivery, as long as all their previous orders were before September 25.

Test kit boxes may have an inaccurate expiration date label, as **many test expiration dates have been extended by the FDA**. Most tests will be good through at least the end of the year. Orders will come with clear instructions on how to tell when the tests actually expire.

The tests are able to detect currently circulating Covid19 strains such as Omicron subvariant XBB.1.5 as well as the newer EG.5 and BA.2.86. These are the dominant strains in most parts of the country, and are also the strains covered by the latest versions of the Covid19 booster shots that were recently approved by the FDA. Though there is no evidence these strains are more dangerous than previous Covid19 variants, they may spread more easily. The restart of the free test kit program comes as Covid19 cases have risen in the past few months.

To order your four new test kits, go to covid.gov/tests. If you need assistance, contact the Service Coordinator at 301-412-2480.



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When it comes to mental health in the senior community, at least 1 and 4 older adults experience some mental disorder such as depression, anxiety, psychoses, or dementia. This number is expected to double by 2030.

- Depression - a common but serious illness that negatively affects your mood and the way you think
- Anxiety - a feeling of constant fear, dread, or uneasiness
- Dementia - a loss of higher brain function
- Psychosis - a loss of reality with all cognitive faculties intact, often confused with dementia

Some signs of mental health issues include isolation, appetite changes, confusion or disorientation, changes in personal hygiene, and loss of interest in activities. Mental health issues are not an inevitable part of aging, however. Most older people don't develop mental health problems. They can be caused by different changes in our lives such as retirement or bereavement. Physical illness can also affect your mental health.

Some ways to improve your mental health include socializing as often as possible, working on your cognitive health, exercising, speaking with a therapist, or even caring for a pet. Sort out your medication and keep tally of them, and take notes of new side effects, check in often, and pay attention to moods. When caring for a relative with mental health problems you can use these same methods. The most important thing is to remain connected to is family members, friends and like-minded seniors. This is psychologically beneficial and helps minimize the issues that come with mental health problems.

Remember that when dealing with someone with mental health issues, comments such as "cheer up, you're fine" or "you don't have anything to be worried about" might seem helpful to you, but to them it can make them feel criticized and humiliated for feeling the way that they do. Mental health conditions are serious and cannot just be brushed off. It is important not to judge or dismiss anyone experiencing a mental illness.





Capital Area Food Bank Programs at Green Ridge House

The **Senior Brown Bag** program offers eligible older adults a free bag of nonperishable foods and sometimes frozen or fresh produce once a month. Bags are delivered on the third Tuesday of each month. To be eligible for Brown Bags, you must be at least 60 years old and receive SNAP (Food Stamps), Medical Assistance, or Energy Assistance **OR** be within the income requirements in the chart below.

Residents who already get Brown Bags will receive renewal forms in mid-October. **If you are interested in joining the Brown Bag program for the first time, contact the Service Coordinator at 301-412-2480 by Thursday, November 16.**

<i>Household Size</i>	<i>Gross Monthly Income</i>
1	\$1,823
2	\$2,465

My Groceries to Go is a new program that offers a free box of nonperishable foods to seniors, similar to Brown Bags. To be eligible for My Groceries to Go, you must be at least 60 years old and be within the income requirements in the chart below. You can get both Brown Bags and My Groceries to Go if you qualify for both! **Contact the Service Coordinator to join.**

<i>Household Size</i>	<i>Gross Monthly Income</i>
1	\$1,580
2	\$2,137

Fresh produce distributions take place at the Greenbelt Community Center on the third Thursday of every month. This event is free for **ALL** residents of Greenbelt and the surrounding areas, there are no eligibility requirements! Green Ridge House residents can have produce delivered to their apartment door instead of going to the Community Center to pick up. (Due to space constraints, there may be a smaller quantity or variety of items delivered.)

In August, the City started using an online registration system for everyone who receives produce. Green Ridge House residents who get produce delivery can be registered by the Service Coordinator. **If you are interested in produce delivery, contact the Service Coordinator to register.**



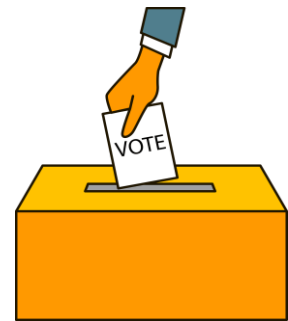
Medicare Open Enrollment begins October 15 4

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 2024.

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.**

Election Season Returns

It's that time of year again... Election Day for the next local election is **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**. Vote for your next **Mayor** and **Council Members!** For more details, see the flyer attached at the end of this gazette.



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.

Tai Chi: Wednesdays from 10 AM – 11 AM in the Community Room.

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 third Wednesday 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.

Crochet and Needlepoint Group: Every second Thursday of the month 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM in the Library.

“NEW”: The **Strong Seniors Fitness Class** is back! Now every Tuesday from 11 AM – 12 PM in the Community Room.