COVID-19 Newsletter

WINTER 2022

A summary of COVID-19 information about vaccines, testing, and safety guidelines. Updated on January 14, 2022.

Stay Up-to-Date with COVID-19

Visit the [Johns Hopkins Patient Care Website](#) for updated information on what to do if you think you have COVID-19 or if you've been exposed.

The [CDC website](#) has the latest recommendations for travel and isolation, as well as up-to-date data on cases and transmission.

Visit [Google](#) for the latest COVID-19 case numbers and transmission statistics.

Basic COVID-19 Information

The vaccines that are approved for distribution use one of two possible mechanisms to elicit an immune response. Either the vaccine contains a modified, harmless vector virus, or the vaccine contains mRNA. Both types cause our bodies to produce proteins that are only found on the surface of the COVID-19 virus. In response, our body's immune system creates antibodies that will recognize and attack those specific proteins if they enter our system. Read more [here](#).

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine does not make you completely immune to the virus or its recent variants (i.e. Omicron). The vaccine may protect you from getting infected after an exposure, or may prevent you from getting as sick from COVID-19 as you would have if you had not gotten vaccinated.

The vaccine does not prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to other people. This is why continuing to wear a mask and practicing social-distancing is so important, even after getting vaccinated. Please note: Due to safety risks highlighted by health professionals, children under the age of 2 should not wear face coverings.

For more details and answers to questions about COVID-19 and the vaccine, visit our Johns Hopkins website [here](#). Para Español haga clic [aquí](#).

Vaccine Options & Eligibility

Vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson's Janssen are approved for distribution.

COVID-19 vaccines are widely available across the United States for everyone who is 5 years old or older. Often, these vaccines are offered free-of-charge to those who are eligible, regardless of their health insurance or immigration status. You can read more about eligibility and finding a vaccination site on the CDC website.

Booster Eligibility & Vaccine Preferences

The two-shot mRNA vaccines, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, both offer a third shot in their vaccination series, called a booster shot. The one-shot viral vector Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine currently does not offer a booster shot.

The current boosters use the same formula as their primary series, sometimes in a smaller dose, as is the case with Moderna. Over time, medical professionals have observed reduced effectiveness of the primary series, which is common among vaccines, so the booster is used to replenish the antibodies in your immune system.

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna boosters are approved for use as a follow-up to any completed vaccination series, even Johnson and Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

Those who are 18 years old or older are eligible to receive either booster at least 5 months after a completed Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna primary vaccination series, or at least 2 months after a Johnson and Johnson's Janssen vaccination.

Children as young as 12 years old may be eligible for a booster, but only if they received Pfizer-BioNTech as their primary vaccination. Those who are 12-17 years of age who received Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines may only receive the Pfizer-BioNTech booster.

Johns Hopkins offers (starting Jan. 18, 2022) Pfizer-BioNTech boosters to children ages 5-11 who are immunosuppressed and are at least 28 days past the completion of their primary vaccination series of Pfizer-BioNTech. Read more about how to get a vaccine or booster through Johns Hopkins here.

For more details on the vaccines and boosters, visit the CDC website.

Omicron and the Vaccine

Recent data suggests that the first two doses of an mRNA vaccine, specifically Pfizer-BioNTech, are only about 40% effective in preventing a symptomatic Omicron infection.

This is lower than Pfizer's about 60% effectiveness against the Delta variant and the over 90% efficacy against the original strain.

However, receiving a Pfizer-BioNTech booster has been shown to increase vaccine effectiveness against Omicron to just over 75%.

Where to Get Vaccinated

Call 1-855-634-6829 for Maryland COVID Vax assistance. Telephone assistance is available 7 days a week in English and Spanish.

The COVIDLink website and Vaccines.gov will help you find a vaccination location near you.

Johns Hopkins administers vaccines to eligible patients. For more information, visit our Johns Hopkins website here to find a vaccine clinic near you or to schedule through MyChart.

Where to Get Tested

Johns Hopkins and the State of Maryland urges those who have recently travelled, been exposed, or have symptoms to get tested for COVID-19. Visit the State of Maryland's COVIDLink website for testing locations near you.

Go here to find and schedule tests in or around Baltimore and at various Johns Hopkins campuses.

Maryland.gov will show you COVID-19 testing sites near you.

FREE testing at CVS, Walgreens, and Rite Aid.

CDC SAYS:

IF YOU COME IN CLOSE CONTACT* WITH SOMEONE WHO TESTED POSITIVE

No need to quarantine if...
- You are 18+ years old, fully vaccinated, and have received a booster.

- You are 5-17 years old and are fully vaccinated, booster or no booster.

- You tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

Quarantine for 5+ days if...**
- You are 18+ years old and fully vaccinated but DO NOT have the booster.

- You are not vaccinated.

Whether or not you are told to quarantine, you should wear a mask (N95 or KN95 preferred) around others for at least 10 days and get tested at least 5 days** after your positive contact.**

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS

- Get tested!

- Isolate for 5+ days** after the start of your symptoms if you have been fever-free for 24-hours, without fever-reducing medication.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Isolate for 5+ days if...**
- You are asymptomatic:
    Your isolation can end 5+ days after you receive your positive test.

- You have symptoms:
    Your isolation can end 5+ days after the start of your symptoms if you have been fever-free for 24-hours, without fever-reducing medication.

Isolate for 10-20 days if...**
- You have a weakened immune system.

- You were severely ill and/or hospitalized.

*Remember: Close contact means you were less than 6 feet away from an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, even if you were wearing a mask.

**Remember: The day of your exposure, the day your symptoms begin, or the day of your positive COVID-19 test (if you are asymptomatic) is considered Day 0.

MASKS ON MARYLAND

COVID-19 Guidelines to Follow

Please follow these guidelines as we continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Wear a mask!

- Wash your hands frequently, with soap, for at least 20 seconds each time.

- Practice social distancing*** around others while wearing a mask.

- Limit travel and keep social gatherings to 10 people max.

- If you have any of the following symptoms, get tested!
    o   Acute loss of taste or smell
    o   Fever or chills
    o   Cough
    o   Sore throat
    o   Shortness of breath
    o   Difficulty breathing
    o   Headache
    o   Diarrhea/vomiting/nausea
    o   Fatigue
    o   Muscle or body aches
    o   Runny nose/congestion

***Remember: In addition to being spread by droplets, recent research on COVID-19 suggests that aerosolized viral particles may remain in the air for up to 3 hours. This means that a distance of 6 feet may not be sufficient to stop the spread of the virus. In general, spend as little time in indoor public spaces as possible and always wear a mask.

Click here for the most up-to-date CDC COVID-19 guidelines

COVID-19 HOTLINES

| **443-997-9537** to schedule a **symptomatic** test | **443-997-5476** info about **long-term** COVID-19 symptoms | **833-979-2266** COVID-19 Prevention: report facility non-compliance | "Contact Us" chat box for general COVID-19 questions |

The Science Behind the N95

In the beginning of the pandemic, many people rushed to purchase cloth masks to counteract the shortage and expense of surgical masks. Now, medical professionals and infectous-disease experts are finding that cloth masks are not sufficient to stop the spread of COVID-19. Many places are now recommending, or even requiring, KN95 or N95 masks whenever possible.

While cloth masks may help protect against large droplets that carry the virus, they are often made of single-layer cloth and poorly-fitted, making them less useful against the smaller, aerosolized COVID-19 particles.

KN95 and N95 masks are preferred because both have multiple layers of dense fibers that protect against small particles and are designed to be form-fitting. These masks wrap around the cheeks and chin securely and account for nose bridge fit with an adjustable wire. They use a tight mesh in their layers, along with an electrostatic charge in their filter material, called polypropylene, that traps the smaller viral particles that other masks may let in or out. Check out the infographic below, found in the Wall Street Journal, to see just how much more effective N95 masks are compared to other types.

Although KN95 and N95 masks are the safest choice for protecting yourself and others against COVID-19, they aren't always easily accessible for the general public.

If you are having trouble finding or affording KN95 or N95 masks, surgical masks can be a useful alternative, if used correctly. Surgical masks are made of polypropylene, the same material used in the KN95 and N95 masks, which provides the same virus-blocking electrostatic charge. However, issues arise with surgical masks when it comes to the fit. Often, these masks come with with loose ear loops and gaps around the nose, cheeks, and chin. There are a few simple measures that can make a surgical mask safer, including tying the ear loops tighter, tucking in the extra fabric that will bunch around your cheeks, and ensuring that the top wire is bent around your nose bridge for a snug fit. Another option for improving the effectiveness of your surgical mask is to wear a well-fitting cloth mask overtop.

Ultimately, any mask is better than no mask at all. Make the best choice for you and your family and help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Cloth mask

Surgical mask

KN95 mask

N95 mask

Time it takes to transmit an infectious dose of Covid-19

PERSON NOT INFECTED IS WEARING

PERSON INFECTED IS WEARING

	Nothing	Cloth mask	Surgical mask	N95
Nothing	15 min.	20 min.	30 min.	2.5 hours
Cloth mask	20 min.	27 min.	40 min.	3.3 hours
Surgical mask	30 min.	40 min.	1 hour	5 hours
N95	2.5 hours	3.3 hours	5 hours	25 hours

It will take 25 hours for an infectious dose of Covid-19 to transmit between people wearing non-fit-tested N95 respirators. If they're using tightly sealed N95s—where only 1% of particles enter the facepiece—they will have 2,500 hours of protection.

Note: Results published in Spring 2021. The CDC expects the Omicron variant to spread more easily.
Source: ACGIH's Pandemic Response Task Force

Additional Resources

Baltimore City Emergency Food Resources
Delivered Grocery Boxes, SNAP Benefits, Grab-n-Go Meals
GO HERE

Maryland Department of Human Services
Food, Cash, Energy Assistance
GO HERE

Baltimore City Emergency Food Strategy
Produce Boxes, Food Bank, Food Map, Home Delivery
GO HERE

The Lord Baltimore TRI Center
COVID-19 Isolation Assistance
GO HERE

•POP-UP testing•

Johns Hopkins Bayview Circle White tent next to the Bayview Emergency Room **Walk-ups ONLY**	**8 AM – 2 PM** **Seven days a week**

Phlebotomy Mobile Lab 4300 Belair Road Baltimore, MD 21206, Suite C Call 800-944-4860 with any questions. **To book an appointment, go** here**.**	**M-F:** **9 AM – 5 PM** **Saturday:** **10 AM – 4 PM**