COVID 19 Resource List for Montgomery County Older Adults*

3.25.2020

I. Information on Testing and care

If you think you are ill and need medical care, you should seek medical attention. <u>Call ahead before going so the provider can take precautions when you arrive</u>. Testing guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) change frequently. Please visit <u>their site</u> for updates on their guidance about who should be tested.

Your physician or health care provider will assess your symptoms and determine if diagnostic testing for the COVID-19 virus is appropriate. If your health care provider suspects COVID-19, THEY will coordinate testing with a commercial lab or the State's public health laboratory. While some commercial labs have the ability to analyze and report results to the patient or provider who ordered testing, the labs currently only perform the analysis and DO NOT collect specimens directly from patients. If you would like to speak with a nurse please call 240-777-1755.

<u>If you do NOT have a primary care physician</u>

- Call your local urgent care center to let them know to expect you before arriving. To reduce exposure of self and others, it is best to call to see about appointments or wait times.
- If you **do not** have health insurance: Maryland Health Benefit Exchange has announced a Special Enrollment Period during Maryland's Coronavirus (COVID-19) State of Emergency. Starting March 16, 2020, uninsured Maryland residents now have an additional opportunity to sign up for health coverage through [Maryland Health Connection](#) (MHC), the state-based health insurance Marketplace

<u>When should I come to the hospital?</u>

- **You should *only* come in to the hospital if you are experiencing severe breathing difficulties or potentially life-threatening symptoms**.
- Prior to being aware of COVID-19, would your symptoms have prompted you to seek medical attention? If "No…", then please stay home and call your primary care physician. If "Yes…", or if you are instructed by your care provider, please go to your nearest Urgent Care, Emergency Provider, or dial 911.
- All 6 Montgomery County hospitals have expanded their triage capabilities
- If you are sick with flu-like symptoms and go to an emergency room, you may be screened for COVID-19 and testing will be performed only if risk factors have been met.
- If your symptoms are mild, please stay home if you feel sick. To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, it is best to practice social distancing

<u>What are other health information resources available to me?</u>

- Hotline #211- The State of Maryland has set up a public hotline for questions about testing and potential exposure to COVID-19
- Hotline #240-777-1755- The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services hotline

<u>Why am I seeing tents outside of hospitals?</u>

- [Hospitals in Montgomery County Prepare for COVID-19 Virus Spread](#)

II. Phone numbers for older adults without access to online resources

i. Montgomery County Information 240-777-0311
ii. Aging and Disability Services 240-777-3000
iii. The Crisis Center for urgent meantal health: 240-777-4000
iv. Senior call check (automated daily calls from Maryland Office on Aging, including COVID related messages) 1-866-50-CHECK (1-866-502-0560)
v. EveryMind is offering Friendly calls Friendly Visitor provides friendship and emotional support to older adults who are homebound, isolated, and lonely – to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, help individuals remain in the community, and maintain a safe home environment.

   Clients are matched with trained volunteers who share similar interests and visits for one hour per week to form friendships
   Clients must be age 60 and older, live in Montgomery County, and be able to engage in conversation and remember their volunteer from week to week
   Interested volunteers, click here
   Contact Amy Fier, afier@Every-Mind.org, 301.424.0656 x511
vi. Villages: Some neighborhoods have established neighbors helping neighbors' organizations. They have a program for "call buddies", in which they pair up neighbors who frequently check up on each other. For information on villages call 240-777-1231. Villages also offer additional support. See other sections in this packet.
vii. Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline 1.800.272.3900
viii. **Don't forget to fill out your US Census survey**. Call **1-844-330-2020** to get started

III. Online resources by topics:

1. Essentials:

- **Food** (grocery, prepared meals deliveries), free food. Please check the information available on the Montgomery county Food council website
- **Local Grocery stores offering senior only shopping hours.**
- Restaurants that now offer take out and delivery https://visitmontgomery.com/restaurant-directory/?fbclid=IwAR2Gvs-b48KJoqP21UEyXjfqyfJQ1Ik6W4iX3_aC0rRhVxurXOFsILBOyXE
- **Pharmacy**: Many pharmacies now offer online orders and delivery. Call your pharmacy to find out if you can avoid driving over!
- **Aging and Disability Resource Unit (Montgomery County's Aging and Disability Services information and referral email**: ADS@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov
- **Transportation solutions** Go to montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/seniors.html and then click on the link highlighted in yellow and titled Available Transportation Options for Adults Over 50 and People with Disabilities During COVID-19 Health Crisis. The link is located a little farther down the page.
- **Mental well-being** https://www.every-mind.org/
- **Caregivers** Lylie Fisher, Montgomery County Caregiver Support Program Manager has developed a new YouTube Channel for the Caregiver Support Program – Engage@HOME -

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJqcd7_1_7LejYrHWKU-lrw/about. You can find more information on her blogs: https://moco-caregiver.blogspot.com/

- **Don't Forget Census 2020! You can fill your survey online.**

2. Stay Informed

- https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/Coronavirus.html
- https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- https://www.aarp.org/health/?cmp=CON-HEALTH-COVID19-031220
- Scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the Coronavirus. Here are some tips to keep you and your money safe.
  1. Be suspicious of emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), or other experts saying they have information on the virus.
  2. Ignore online offers or advertisements for vaccinations and cures for the Coronavirus.
  3. Don't answer unknown or blocked numbers. If you receive robocalls, hang up right away. Don't give any personal information or press any numbers. The recording may promise that pressing a number will stop the calls; however, it will likely just lead to more.
  4. Do your homework before making any donations. Scammers will use this time to take advantage of your generosity. Don't let anyone rush you into donating. If someone is asking for donations through gift cards or wired money, don't do it.
  5. Beware of online sellers claiming to have in-demand products, like cleaning, household, and health supplies. They may take your payment and never ship your order. They may also be selling items for a price far above their value. Do research on the before ordering anything. If everything checks out, make sure to pay by credit card and keep a record of your transaction.

  For more information on scams and fraud, visit the Federal Trade Commission: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/coronavirus-scams-what-ftc-doing

3. Stay Connected:

- AARP has created AARP Community Connections, partially to help address social isolation and offer virtual volunteer opportunities. It includes a component to capture contact information from people who would like to receive a friendly check-in call from an AARP volunteer. In just one weekend, more than 400 volunteers have signed up to make calls. These "friendly voices" will serve many older adults who are feeling isolated and need help.
- **Senior call check**: The Senior Call Check participants receive an automated call every day. These calls will take place within a time frame chosen by the participant. If the participant does not answer their first call, they will be called two additional times in the same day. If those calls go unanswered, an alternate person, selected by the participant, will be notified.

  The Maryland Department of Aging is issuing additional information on the Senior Call Check program as a free resource to MD residents over 65+ and recommending all seniors use the program as a resource during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Senior Call Check phone lines

are open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and Saturday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. During these hours, seniors can call toll-free 1-866-50-CHECK (1-866-502-0560) and register. Registration is also available online at aging.maryland.gov.

- **The Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990):** A 24/7 toll-free, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This resource provides multilingual, and confidential crisis support. https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline
- **Well Connected (877-797-7299):** A free program offering activities, education, support groups, and friendly conversation over the phone or online. https://covia.org/services/well-connected/
- Villages call buddies: If your community has a village, you may be able to help by connecting with others over the phone to check in.
- Blogpost: WHAT CAN GRANDPARENTS DO TO HELP THEIR GRANDCHILDREN AND VICE-VERSA?
- Intergenerational connections: Find penpals, write joint stories, create poetry, share artwork, inspire with motivational quotes and creatively share your individual strengths with Sharing Smiles. Youth and young adults are available to be paired to send smiles and hugs during this challenging time. https://empoweringtheages.org/sharing-smiles/

4. Stay active

- NIH's GoFor Life: https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/
- My Active Senior
- https://givefit.org/log-in

- Good Housekeeping Magazine Recommended Home Video Workouts
  https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/fitness/a31792038/coronavirus-live-stream-workout-classes/
- Women's Health Magazine Choices for Best Free Yoga Videos -
  https://www.womenshealthmag.com/fitness/g29264172/best-yoga-videos/
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5. Keep learning and stay engaged

- Can you sew? Healthcare workers and other front-line staff need your handy skill to sew masks. National retailer JOANN Fabrics and Craft Stores released a video tutorial on how to make face masks. The retailer encouraged people to drop off them at store locations, where they will be donated to local hospitals.
- Podcasts: if you type "podcasts.google.com" into your web browser, it will open a special page full of free podcasts? That page always features a few dozen trending podcasts, but you can use the search bar at the top to type in any word or phrase to find free podcasts related to your interests
- Montgomery County Library online resources
  https://montgomerycountymd.libguides.com/education

- https://myactivesenior.com/ (fee involved)
- Want to take online classes on technology? www.getsetup.io/ or
- Senior Planet U is offering many online classes. They have a YouTube channel as well. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1fH87GZAPaP-tLl_H1hNGw?mc_cid=967ebe12ce&mc_eid=c8bdb335e8

*Resource packet compiled by Montgomery county Aging and Disability Services. For corrections, updated and edits, please contact Pazit.aviv@montgomerycountymd.gov. Thank you!