

Chevy Chase at Home's Rough Guide to COVID-19 Vaccine (2/19/2021)

Background on Vaccine System in Maryland

There are two vaccines that have been federally approved — from Pfizer and Moderna. Both are two-dose vaccines and must be administered with three to four weeks between doses. The State of Maryland receives weekly allocations of vaccine from the federal government.

The State then allocates to 24 Counties, hospitals, mass vaccination sites, and some pharmacies. (Walgreens and CVS are getting supplies directly from the federal government.) As the weekly shipment varies, vaccine appointments tend to run week-to-week.

There are four primary types of vaccine providers – Montgomery County Department of Health-run clinics, State-run mass vaccination clinics, hospitals/health centers, and pharmacies. Each uses different eligibility criteria. Each has a different registration or appointment process.

For example, Montgomery County is vaccinating adults 75 years and older and pre-registering those 65 – 74 years, while Maryland has opened eligibility for the state-run clinics to adults aged 65 to 74 and other groups in 1C while it continues to vaccinate higher priority groups.

Find information on the State phase guidelines here:

<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/vaccine>

Find Montgomery County phase guidelines here:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/index.html#priority-groups>

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) has opened a telephone assisted appointment system. It is for people without internet access to help them identify and register for a site. The COVID-19 Vaccination Support Center at 1-855-MDGOVAX (1-855-634-6829) is open seven days a week from 7 am to 10 pm.

Categories of vaccine providers and eligibility by phase

Sites to register and secure appointments in order of ease:

1. Montgomery County vaccination clinics

Who is eligible to pre-register for an appointment?

- People in Phase 1A, including health care workers, first responders, nursing homes, vaccinators, and others
- Adults age 75 and older (about 73,000 county residents)

The County is currently only pre-registering those 65 – 74 yrs. *Those 65-74 years who pre-registered using the early original form, should re-register. Most have received an email asking them to re-register.*

The new form has additional questions, including Medical Questions.

Pre-register for the county-run clinics here:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/>

Preregistration information:

- Preregistration is **not** a vaccination appointment—it places you in the queue by priority group. When vaccine doses arrive, we contact residents from the preregistration list and invite them to make an appointment.

Telephone Assistance for Preregistering:

- Those who are 75 years and older without internet access can call the Pre-registration Helpline for assistance at 240-777-2892 seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Bilingual staff (English/Spanish) are available and call takers can also access a translation line to help callers with many other languages.
- This line is for preregistration only.
- General questions about vaccinations and COVID-19 can be answered by calling 240-777-1755 seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Making a Vaccination Appointment:

- Once preregistered, after several weeks or a month, individuals will receive an invitation to make an appointment by phone call or email directly from the County’s Department of Health and Human Services to make an appointment. Email invitations will come from c19vaccination@montgomerycountymd.gov. Please check your spam every day to ensure you do not miss this email appointment link and answer the phone if an unfamiliar local number is calling. Do NOT share this appointment link, this is slowing the process down for everyone.

These are the locations where the county is currently holding its “by appointment only” vaccination clinics, to give you an idea of where you might be traveling to once you get an appointment link from the county:

- White Oak Recreation Center: 1700 April Ln., Silver Spring
- Upper County Recreation Center: 8201 Emory Grove Road, Gaithersburg
- Germantown Recreation Center: 18905 Kingsview Road, Germantown
- Public Safety Training Academy: 8751 Snouffer School Road, Gaithersburg

- Quince Orchard High School: 15800 Quince Orchard Road, North Potomac
- Richard Montgomery High School: 250 Richard Montgomery Dr., Rockville

If they are invited to sign up for an appointment, and their spouse is in the same age group, they can call to ask for an appointment for their spouse as well. The number is 240-777-2892.

Note: this spouse request is only for County vaccinations.

When making an appointment for a county-run clinic, *you may have to upload both your insurance information AND images of the front and back of your insurance card ready to upload to the site.* This request should not impede you from pre-registering. **If you cannot upload this information, simply note the “no insurance” and move on with the process.** Bring the insurance information to the appointment when you do finally get to go in for the vaccination.

Second Dose Appointments:

If you got a first dose from a Montgomery County DHHS-sponsored clinic, you will receive an email from c19vaccination@montgomerycountymd.gov approximately three weeks after your first dose (or four to seven days before your second dose is due) to invite you to make an appointment. You will be given more than one option. The Moderna vaccine (which DHHS clinics use) recommends a second dose be given 28 days after the first dose. Per the CDC, there is no maximum interval between the first and second dose, but we want to provide second doses as close to the 28 days as possible.

Inclement Weather:

If there is a snow day on your appointment, the County will get in touch with you. Your appointment will be recognized the next day at the same time.

2. State-run mass vaccination sites

The State has opened 3 mass vaccination sites at Six Flags America in Prince George’s County, at the Baltimore Convention Center, and at the M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore (note: appointments there go live this week). As these sites are run by the State, they are open to all Maryland residents who meet phase 1A, 1B and 1C requirements. If you are 65-74, this is an option for you. You must have an appointment. No walk-ins are accepted.

Marylanders can make appointments for the **Six Flags mass vaccination site** in Bowie, MD and the **M&T Bank Stadium** when they are available by searching for nearby vaccination sites with their zip code here at <https://www.marylandvax.org/>. You can sign up to be notified by text as soon as appointments open up by **texting “MD Ready” to 898211**. It seems like appointments typically open up on Monday mornings. Normally they go fast once they are live, so be sure to get onto [the website](#) as soon as you get the text.

Alternatively, you can call 855-634-6829 (1-855-MDGOVAX) to make an appointment; prepared to stay on hold a while. This number is open daily 7 am to 10 pm, and was set up to help residents without internet schedule appointments.

Marylanders can pre-register for an appointment at the **Baltimore Convention vaccination site** online at www.umms.org/BCCvaccine. **Note: this link for the Baltimore site is not for the actual scheduling of an appointment.** (This site is run by Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland Medical System, hence the different process.) People needing assistance filling out the appointment request form for the mass vaccination sites can call 443-462-5511, Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4:30 pm. This will connect them with someone who can assist with entering their information into the system and the queue for appointments. (You can cancel appointments at this number as well.)

The State is planning to open additional sites in the upcoming months for Western Maryland, Southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore.

3. Hospitals & health centers

Holy Cross Health (Silver Spring and Germantown)

Holy Cross Health owns and operates two hospitals in the county. *The health system is prioritizing Phases 1A and 1B. It will open appointments to Phase 1C in the future.*

Appointment slots are released on the hospital's [vaccine website page](#); check this web page daily to learn when they will next be opening a batch of appointment slots. You can then return at that time (e.g. 4 p.m. on a Thursday) to try to snag an appointment if you are 75+. (Signing up for an appointment before they run out might require some speed).

Information on what people will need to bring to appointments to verify age or occupation will be emailed to registered individuals.

MedStar

Local MedStar Hospitals include Georgetown Hospital and the Washington Hospital Center. Maryland residents who are age 65 or older can request a vaccination appointment through MedStar [here](#). Our understanding is MedStar patients have priority, but they are letting non-patients pre-register. They are contacting some of their most vulnerable patients.

Adventist HealthCare (Takoma Park and Rockville)

The health system is *providing vaccines to people eligible in Phases 1A, 1B and people who are 65 and older*. The rest of the people in Phase 1C are not eligible at the centers yet.

Residents can [sign up for “alert” emails](#) to notify them when additional appointments become available through the clinics in Rockville and their Takoma Park Alternate Care Site, formerly known as Washington Adventist Hospital.

Johns Hopkins Medicine (Includes Sibley and Suburban)

Johns Hopkins is vaccinating its patients who are eligible in Phases 1A, 1B and 1C, and because of a limited supply is randomly selecting eligible patients to schedule a vaccination. Vaccination locations vary.

An eligible patient is [anyone who has received care](#) with a Johns Hopkins Medicine provider within the last two years. Those who want a chance of receiving a vaccine through Johns Hopkins must activate their online MyChart account, which you can help them sign up for [here](#) if they don't already have this login created.

(Note: this link will require them to include their SSN digits and answer security questions to prove their identity. The alternative is for them to get an activation code, but this can be a stumbling block for the non-tech savvy).

People who meet the criteria will be contacted by email or phone when it is their turn to schedule a vaccine appointment.

Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente is only vaccinating their own patients. If one is a patient and eligible (65 and up), they need to sign in to their kp.org account and complete the [COVID-19 Vaccine Interest questionnaire](#). Kaiser is actively reaching out to qualified members as vaccines and appointments become available, so members do not have to contact their doctor, call, or go online for appointments.

Due to limited supplies, KP is largely just vaccinating 1A and the oldest patients.

[Kaiser coronavirus information.](#)

Hospitals quick links:

- [Adventist HealthCare](#)
- [Holy Cross Hospital](#)
- [Kaiser Permanente](#)
- [MedStar Health](#)
- [Suburban Hospital, a subsidiary of Johns Hopkins](#) (Suburban Hospital is prioritizing existing patients in the Hopkins system).

4. Pharmacies

There are pharmacy partnerships with Walmart, Giant, Safeway, and Rite Aid. Appointments must be made for each location. At this time, vaccine doses are limited and appointments are very hard to find. They appear for a few minutes and then are gone. Monday mornings (such as around 8 a.m. at Safeway or between 6-9 a.m. at Giant) appear to be when some pharmacies release their appointments for the week, and might be the best time to hunt for one. (Though it can vary...we have heard of people finding an appointment at Walgreens at 8:30 am on a Tuesday morning, and between 6-8 am on a Thursday at CVS).

Retail partners include:

- [CVS](#) - is under federal contract to serve long-term care facilities and nursing homes, now open to public for appointments.
- [Giant Pharmacies](#)
- [Safeway](#)
- [Walgreens](#) - is under federal contract to serve long-term care facilities and nursing homes, now open to public for appointments; one must register with Walgreens to view appointments.

Locations in Montgomery County include:

- Safeway, 5510 Norbeck Road, Rockville ([appointments](#))
- Safeway, 11201 Georgia Ave., Wheaton ([appointments](#))
- Giant Food, 10400 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda - [Vaccine Information and Registration](#)
- Giant Food, 1280 East West Highway, Silver Spring - [Vaccine Information and Registration](#)
- Giant Food, 229 Kentlands Blvd., Gaithersburg - [Vaccine Information and Registration](#)
- Giant Food, 15618 Columbia Pike, Burtonsville- [Vaccine Information and Registration](#)

Experiences at these pharmacies can vary; we have heard from members that the process has been more chaotic at the Silver Spring Giant than the Gaithersburg one, for instance.

If you do not already use the Giant Pharmacy, there is an additional form to complete when you try to schedule an appointment with Giant.

Use this link to search for an appointment at a retail location - <https://www.marylandvax.org/>