

BRANCATI CENTER BULLETIN

Dispatched from Baltimore, Maryland

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Dear Neighbors,

In the US and across the globe, we are experiencing another devastating surge of COVID-19 cases. We have now lost over 800,000 Americans to the virus, and we are now seeing our hospitals being stretched thin once again. We also are learning more about how the new COVID-19 virus variant, Omicron, may impact our fight against the virus.

Over the past year, we are fortunate to have gained a very important tool in our fight against the pandemic: vaccines. And we know that masks, physical distancing, ventilation, and testing can help us to slow the spread of COVID-19.

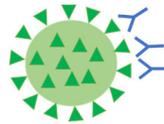
In this issue, we discuss the new vaccine recommendations and how we can stay safe this holiday season. As always, we encourage you to reach out to us if we can help answer questions or find answers to the questions you have (contact information below).

- The Brancati Center Team

COVID-19 in Maryland and Baltimore

- Maryland and Baltimore are experiencing a consistent rise in the number of new cases of COVID-19.
- **Hospitalizations related to COVID-19 have more than doubled over the last few weeks.**

Pulse on the Pandemic



- Over 90% of counties in the US have substantial or high transmission (spread) of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Currently, the Omicron variant is the main virus variant in the US. Before this, it was the Delta variant. Omicron may spread even more easily than the Delta variant, and we are learning more about this variant every day.
- Getting VACCINATED and getting a BOOSTER is our best tool to protect ourselves against severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.
- We also need to continue using our other tools to stop the spread of the virus: masking, testing, physical distancing, ventilation and hand hygiene.

Sources: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/>

STAYING SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAYS AND BEYOND...

While we learn more about new variants of COVID-19 such as Omicron, we know we have the tools to keep ourselves and others safe from COVID-19:



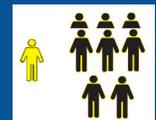
- Get vaccinated and get boosted! (see page 2 for more info)

- Wear a mask



Especially in indoor public spaces, on public transportation, in crowded outdoor settings, and in settings when you are in close contact with those who are not fully vaccinated

- Practice physical distancing, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces



- Gather safely:

- Keep gatherings small. Don't attend if you aren't feeling well!
- **Consider testing, including self-testing, before having indoor gatherings with individuals who don't live in your household.** Contact your healthcare provider with any questions on how to interpret the results or time the test before the gathering!

- Know your status– get tested!

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has (or is being tested for) COVID-19, **quarantine and contact your healthcare provider about testing.** Remember, COVID-19 symptoms can be mild and feel like your seasonal allergies or a cold.

We want to hear from you!

Website: www.brancaticenter.org

Email: brancaticenter@jhmi.edu

Facebook: [BrancatiCenter](https://www.facebook.com/BrancatiCenter)

Twitter: [@BrancatiCenter](https://twitter.com/BrancatiCenter)

The Johns Hopkins Brancati Center
is based in Baltimore, Maryland.



Get Vax'ed! Get Boosted!

The CDC recommends:

- **All people ages 5 and older should be vaccinated against COVID-19**
- **Everyone ages 18 and older should get a booster shot**
- As of 12/16/21, the CDC said it prefers that people receive an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer and Moderna) over the J&J vaccine. This decision was made after reviewing new data on effectiveness, rare side effects and also considering the US vaccine supply.

If you got the:	Who should get a booster?	When should I get a booster?	What booster can I receive?
Pfizer vaccine	Ages 18 and up <i>(16-17 years can get a booster)</i>	At least 6 months after completing your primary vaccine series (for most people, after their 2nd dose)	Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the US
Moderna vaccine	Ages 18 and up		
J&J vaccine	Ages 18 and up	At least 2 months after getting the dose of the J&J vaccine	

Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html>; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>

COVID-19 VACCINATION RESOURCES

There are various sites at which you can receive your COVID-19 vaccine and booster.

- ◆ Check with your doctor's office
- ◆ Check at local pharmacies
- ◆ To find a vaccine clinic near you across Maryland, check out:
 - <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/vaccine>
 - <https://massvax.maryland.gov/>
 - You can also call: [1-855-MD-GOVAX \(634-6829\)](tel:1-855-MD-GOVAX) for assistance with registering
- ◆ ****For Baltimore City****
 - Visit: <https://covax.baltimorecity.gov/en-US/>
 - Or call 443-934-8650 (BCHD's COVAX Call Center)



More questions about the vaccine? Learn more at:
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/for-patients.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>