



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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GATHERING FOR THE HOLIDAYS? GET A COVID TEST FIRST, HEALTH OFFICIALS URGE

CUMBERLAND, MD – The Allegheny County Health Department and the Maryland Department of Health are urging the public to consider getting tested for COVID prior to hosting or attending holiday gatherings this season. Due to the prevalence of the contagious Delta and Omicron variants, MDH strongly recommends that everyone be tested if they are symptomatic or suspect close exposure to a positive case, regardless of their vaccination status.

“As we move further into the holidays and winter season continues, getting vaccinated, boosted and tested are the most important precautions Marylanders can take to protect themselves against COVID-19 and the Delta and Omicron variants,” said MDH Secretary Dennis R. Schrader. “Marylanders getting a COVID-19 test before they visit their family and friends will give them the peace of mind that they can safely enjoy their gatherings.”

Free drive-thru COVID testing is available at the Allegheny County Fairgrounds on Mondays from 2 to 7 p.m. and Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The testing clinic will be open on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

Vaccinations and boosters continue to be the best way to protect against COVID-19. Appointments are available for the December 29 Moderna booster clinic at the Allegheny County Fairgrounds. In order to get the Moderna booster, individuals must be 18 years of age or older and must have completed their two-dose vaccination series (Moderna or Pfizer) at least six months ago or received the Johnson and Johnson single-dose vaccine at least two months ago. Register online for an appointment at <https://www.marylandvax.org/appointment/en/reg/0511621369>. For assistance registering for an appointment, county residents can call the COVID-19 call center at 240-650-3999.

The Allegheny County Health Department continues to offer the following COVID-19 vaccinations on a walk-in basis every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Allegheny County Fairgrounds at 11400 Moss Avenue, Cumberland, MD:

- First and second doses of Moderna vaccine (age 18 and older)
- First and second doses of Pfizer vaccine (age 12 and older)
- Booster doses of Pfizer vaccine (age 16 and older)

A youth Pfizer vaccine clinic for ages five to eleven is slated at the Allegheny County Health Department (12501 Willowbrook Road, Cumberland, MD) on the ground floor of the Willowbrook Office Complex from 3 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, January 5. To schedule an appointment, go to <https://www.marylandvax.org/appointment/en/reg/1160824904>.

COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are also widely available in the community at local pharmacies, urgent care clinics, and some primary care providers. Currently, 48.8% of Allegheny County residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, compared to 70.1% of all Marylanders.

As of press time, updated COVID cases and deaths for Allegheny County were not available from MDH.

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