

THE 50+ Connection

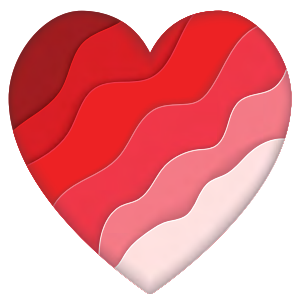
NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

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It's Time to Get Heart Smart!

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AMERICAN
HEART MONTH

Nearly HALF of American adults have hypertension (high blood pressure), a condition often called “the silent killer” because one in five Americans do not even know that they have it. Blood pressure is considered high when the systolic (top number) blood pressure is above 140 and the diastolic (bottom number) is greater than 90. Hypertension increases your risk for stroke, kidney disease, and heart failure, so it is important to check your blood pressure regularly.

Six Steps to Help Reduce the Risk and Manage Hypertension

Follow a heart-healthy diet. A diet focused on heart health can reduce your risk of developing hypertension (and can lower your blood pressure if it is already high). The DASH Eating Plan (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) is a flexible and balanced approach to help create a heart-healthy eating style for life. The DASH diet is rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products and low in sodium, saturated and total fat and cholesterol. It is also high in calcium, magnesium, potassium, protein, and fiber and limited in processed foods and added sugars. For more details, go to www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH.

Reduce sodium intake. Choose foods that are low in salt and substitute spices, garlic, or onions to add flavor to your foods. The American Heart Association recommends a daily sodium intake of 2,300 mg, or no more than 1,500 mg per day if you have hypertension.

Maintain a healthy weight. Excess weight is a major risk factor for hypertension. If you are overweight, losing as little as five to 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure. For every 20 pounds lost, you can lower your systolic blood pressure by five to 20 points.

Exercise regularly. Exercising for at least 30 minutes each day can keep blood pressure under control, and can lower your systolic pressure by five to nine points within three months.

Limit alcohol consumption. Drinking alcoholic beverages can raise blood pressure and add empty calories to your diet, which hinders weight loss. Limit your intake to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.



A Message from Howard County Executive Calvin Ball



This month we are celebrating progress in action after breaking ground for the long-awaited Dr. Edward L. Cochran East Columbia 50+ Center expansion. Identified as one of the top priority projects in the 2015 Master Plan for the Office on Aging and Independence, the nearly 30,000 square foot center is moving forward after getting \$6.5 million in state and local funding last year. This transformational center will be a critical gathering space, community hub and will provide social support for older adults. Thank you again to so many members of our community who helped see this project through. We can't wait to celebrate its opening next year.

Now that the Age-Friendly Action Plan has been accepted by AARP, implementation of the more than 80 recommendations can begin, guiding the county toward becoming an age-friendly community. Involvement is needed from all levels of the community — from individuals to small groups to large businesses — to take on leadership roles to move the plan forward. All members of the community are encouraged to decide how, where and when they will become involved in the action steps to make Howard County a great place to grow up and grow older. Learn more about the Action Plan and sign up to be part of making a difference at www.howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly.

In January, we faced another surge of COVID-19 cases and a new variant, so it's more important than ever that our residents are vaccinated and boosted. As of last month, 22 percent of residents 65 and older had not yet received their booster shot. Be sure to schedule a booster as soon as possible to protect yourself and others at vaccine.gov.

Take medications as prescribed. Blood pressure medication, when combined with the lifestyle changes mentioned above, can help you successfully manage hypertension.

If you are a resident who is 60 years or older, and need dietary guidance to meet your health goals, registered Dietitian Carmen Roberts is available for free nutrition consultations via phone or in-person. Contact your local 50+ Center today to register today or call 410-313-0387 (voice/relay).

Focus on Heart Health

BAIN 50+ CENTER

Tuesday, February 15 • 9:30 a.m. to noon

Take a snapshot of your current fitness level by participating in two simple aerobic fitness tests. Participants will receive a fitness report card and information about opportunities to stay active in Howard County. Testing is free, and performed by Certified Exercise Professionals.

To register for a testing time slot, call 410-313-6073 (voice/relay).



Join the Action Plan!

Community and stakeholder engagement is at the core of the Howard County Age-Friendly Action Plan. Since the launch of the initiative in December 2019, more than 100 community members dedicated over 4,000 hours of time researching, reviewing and developing recommendations for the Action Plan, which was reviewed by a 25-member steering committee and approved by county administration and AARP. The new year marks the beginning of a three-year commitment Howard County has made to implement the action steps to become a more age-friendly community.

Now is the time for you to get involved — as an individual, as a member of a community organization, faith-based community, business or nonprofit agency in Howard County — by joining one of the many teams that will put the ideas of this plan into action. To be successful, it will take people from across the community, from different cultures, age groups, and backgrounds working together.

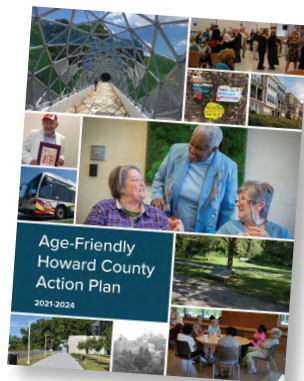
The action plan addresses concepts around the eight domains of livability established by the World Health Organization. Eighty action steps address issues related to housing, transportation, social participation, volunteering, work, civic engagement, access to health and community services, and more.

Ways to be Part of this Exciting Venture

- Join a workgroup to address the action items
- Organize a fun age-friendly event
- If you are a business owner, sponsor an event
- Join a work group with other forward-thinking individuals to plan and enjoy the benefits that come from being in a livable community

No experience is needed; your participation requires only a will and an interest to make a difference for today and the future. Meetings will be held virtually with opportunities to meet in person as conditions allow. Persons of all ages are needed to develop a community for all ages.

Join one of the upcoming orientation meetings to learn about Age-Friendly Howard County and the Action Plan. For more information and to register go to www.howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly.



DEMENTIA Live®

An interactive experience that immerses participants into life with dementia resulting in a deeper understanding of what it's like to live with a cognitive impairment and sensory change.

2022 SCHEDULE

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

Monday, February 14 • 2:00 pm

VIRTUAL PROGRAM — REGISTRANTS WILL BE SENT LOG-IN DETAILS PRIOR TO EVENT

Monday, March 7 • 6:00 pm

VIRTUAL PROGRAM — REGISTRANTS WILL BE SENT LOG-IN DETAILS PRIOR TO EVENT

Monday, April 11 • 6:00 pm

VIRTUAL PROGRAM — REGISTRANTS WILL BE SENT LOG-IN DETAILS PRIOR TO EVENT

Wednesday, May 11 • 6:00 pm

IN PERSON EVENT TO BE HELD ON SITE AT

Howard County Office on Aging and Independence
9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia 21046

SPACE IS LIMITED!

To register for Dementia Live®, call 410-313-5917.



"Because it's frightening to care for someone you don't understand"

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

EMILY LECLERCQ

410-313-5917 (VOICE/RELAY)

map@howardcountymd.gov • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



This annual event offers parents, grandparents and caregivers the opportunity to speak directly with representatives from the many child care programs throughout the county. To help in the selection process, parent educators from the Office of Children and Families will present "How to Choose an Early Childhood Program" at 11 a.m., noon and 1 p.m.

Admission is FREE. Attendees are encouraged to bring a nonperishable food item or unopened pack of diapers or wipes to donate to the Howard County Food Bank.

The Child Care Fair registration table will provide information and digital access to the 2022 Parent's Guide to Howard County.

PRE-REGISTRATION is highly recommended so event organizers can contact attendees in case of inclement weather on the day of the event.

Registration link: <https://2022childcarefair.eventbrite.com>

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND!

Saturday, February 26 • 10 AM to 2 PM

MASKS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL ATTENDEES

North Laurel Community Center
9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel 20723

To request a sign language interpreter or other accommodations to participate, call 410-313-1940 at least one week in advance.

STAY INFORMED WITH DCRS!

Get the latest news from the Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services and the Office on Aging and Independence!

- Visit our website at www.howardcountymd.gov/aging
- Follow us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/HoCoCommunity and on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/HoCoCommunity
- For resources and assistance, contact **Maryland Access Point** at 410-313-1234 (voice/relay) or email map@howardcountymd.gov



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This publication is available in alternate formats upon request. To join the subscriber list, go to <https://bit.ly/3o4GAee>.

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