

THE 50+ Connection

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

A Publication of the Department of Community Resources and Services

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We've Got You Covered

Information is the Key to Avoiding Scams

Learn how to protect yourself from fraud, identity theft, and scams during **National Consumer Protection Week, March 6 to 12**. Every day, the Howard County Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) alerts residents to common scams in our community. "Chances are good that you know someone who has been scammed," says OCP Administrator Tracy Rezvani, "Sharing what you know can help protect others from becoming a victim."



Older adults are frequently targeted by sweepstakes and tech scams. Tech support scammers pretend to be calling from Microsoft®, Apple®, or other tech companies, or send pop-up messages warning about a problem with your computer. They want you to believe your computer is infected with a virus, or that a hacker is trying to access your computer. This is really a ploy to get you to give access to your computer or pay for bogus technical support. The companies behind sweepstakes scams send mailers that make people think they've won a large cash prize and that the recipient only needs to pay a small fee to claim it.

Be Alert to Other Scams

ROMANCE SCAMS have thrived during the pandemic as we have been isolated and excuses for why the love interest can't meet in person seem more acceptable.

IMPOSTERS can pose as the Social Security Administration, Medicare, the IRS, your bank, Amazon, IT support, sweepstakes, or a utility. These imposters either alert you to a breach, threaten some cutoff or arrest, or demand personal information or money.

ENERGY SCAMS include door-to-door sales that offer water testing, home energy audits, or claim to be from a utility offering to lower your rates. Ask for their peddler and solicitor license issued by OCP.

CHARITY SCAMS come in the form of non-existent charities or bogus PACs pretending to be charities. Check with the Secretary of State's office to make sure the charity is listed, and research them through Charity Navigator, Guidestar, Give.org or Charity Watch.

HOME REPAIR SCAMS escalate between spring and fall. Unlicensed home improvement contractors and landscapers show up at your door, especially after a storm, offering amazing prices for a deposit, and never return. Ask for their peddler and solicitor license issued by OCP.

GRANDPARENT SCAMS are when you are contacted by a criminal posing as a panicked grandchild in need of money quickly for an emergency, such as a hospital bill or bail money.

"One good rule of thumb is the 20-second-rule," says Rezvani, "Spend at least that amount of time thinking about — or better yet discussing with someone you trust — whether the call, knock at the door, or email is legitimate." For assistance with suspected fraud or scams, email consumer@howardcountymd.gov, or call 410-313-6420 or follow us on social media using @HoCoCommunity.

At the Office of Consumer Protection, we've got you covered!

A Message from
Howard County Executive

Calvin Ball



Last year, more than 95,000 people in the U.S. were scammed by a con that started on social media. Reports of social media fraud increased for all age groups in 2021. For many of our older residents who are working toward retirement, or already living on a fixed income, becoming the victim of an online scam could be devastating. This month, we are highlighting the many resources, tips and services available through our Office of Consumer Protection, including how to avoid scams, make smart purchasing decisions, and to better understand your consumer rights.

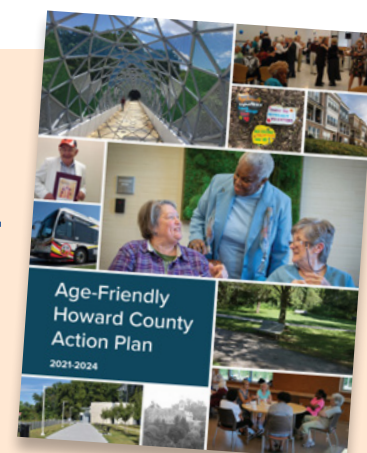
It's a priority of my administration to ensure all our residents — especially those who are the most at-risk — understand their rights as consumers. Last month, we welcomed our new **Consumer Protection Administrator, Tracy Rezvani**, whose expertise will be vital to advance consumer protection issues in Howard County. Stay informed of scam alerts and learn more about how to protect yourself at howardcountymd.gov/consumer or 410-313-6420.

This month we also encourage all residents to learn more about the **Howard County Age-Friendly Action Plan**, which was recently approved by AARP. The plan has more than 80 recommendations on how to make Howard County the best place to grow up and grow older. As a community, we will work together to implement as many recommendations as possible over the next three years, but we need your input and support. Call 410-313-6537 or visit howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly or to learn how you can get involved and help bring Howard County closer to becoming a more inclusive, accessible, safer, and healthier community.



**Here's a great way to
make a difference in
your community!**

We need your help to implement the 80 action steps to make Howard County a great place to grow up and grow older. To view the **Age-Friendly Action Plan** and find out how you can get involved, visit us at www.howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly.



Add Spices to Enhance Flavors!

By Carmen Roberts, MS, RD, LDN
Nutritionist, Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

March is National Nutrition Month®, and 2022 features a call to “Celebrate a World of Flavors.” This year, make it your goal to eat a variety of foods from all food groups while incorporating your favorite cultural flavors and traditions, and trying some new ones!

If you need to cut back on sodium, experiment with herbs and spices from around the world to flavor your foods. Try sweeter spices like cinnamon, cardamom, allspice, nutmeg, or cloves for a flavorful twist the next time you are roasting potatoes, beets, carrots, or turnips. Paprika gives a smoky flavor to your favorite meats and veggies without added sodium. If you’re looking to spice things up, add red pepper flakes, chili powder, cayenne pepper, or dry mustard. For savory flavor, use dried oregano, rosemary, thyme, cumin, coriander, marjoram, or bay leaves to rice, beans and potatoes. Experiment with fresh herbs like basil, cilantro, parsley, dill, chives, or mint to season pasta, veggies, rice, and seafood.

Salt-free blends made by Mrs. Dash® and McCormick’s® can help add flavor without added sodium, or you can make your own blend. Try this flavorful recipe to spice up your favorite meat, poultry, vegetable, and rice — it can be used on just about *anything!*

Salt-Free Seasoning Blend Recipe

- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
 - 1½ teaspoons dried basil
 - 1½ teaspoons dried parsley
 - 1¼ teaspoons dried savory spice
 - 1¼ teaspoons ground thyme
 - 1 teaspoon ground mace
 - 1 teaspoon onion powder
 - 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
 - 1 teaspoon dried sage
 - ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Combine well and store in an airtight container.



AgeWell

In partnership with Howard County General Hospital, the Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) offers **AgeWell** two days/week for older adults. The program features basic aerobic moves to increase cardiovascular endurance and muscle stamina, helping participants build lean muscle mass and bone density through strength training. Classes conclude with a set of stretches to help you feel your best. Fee varies by location based on session dates. Individuals can register online, by phone, or at any 50+ Center.



- 1 Bain 50+ Center • 410-313-7213**
5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia 21044
Mondays/Wednesdays • Noon to 1:00 p.m.
- 2 Elkridge 50+ Center • 410-313-5192**
6540 Washington Boulevard, Elkridge 21075
Tuesdays/Thursdays • 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.
- 3 North Laurel 50+ Center • 410-313-0380**
9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel 20723
Wednesdays/Fridays • 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

To register online, search “AgeWell” on the Active Net site at <https://apm.activecommunities.com/howardcounty/>

SEASONED SISTERS VIRTUAL PROGRAM

Wednesdays • Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Laugh, learn and grow with women who have lived a little, laughed a lot, and are seasoned by life experiences. Led by a trained facilitator, SeniorsTogether’s new group welcomes women interested in sharing thoughts, encouraging and connecting with one another. Currently meets virtually via Webex.



To attend, contact Karen Hull at 410-313-7466 (voice/relay) or email khull@howardcountymd.gov.

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

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, March 7 • 6:00 pm

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

Monday, April 11 • 2:00 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

Howard County

Office on Aging & Independence

The 50+ Connection is published monthly by the Howard County Office on Aging and Independence.

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

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046
410-313-6410 (VOICE/RELAY) • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

Find us on www.Facebook.com/HoCoCommunity

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