



UMB RECOVERY TASK FORCE

Nov. 20, 2020

Thanksgiving will certainly look and feel different for many of us this year as we weigh the bond of a family meal against the risk of COVID-19.

Several resources in this week's newsletter address a range of issues, including University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) guidance on testing and travel and the pitfalls of holiday gatherings. We cannot let our guard down.

The [CDC announced](#) Thursday that it is recommending against traveling for Thanksgiving, but for those who do, please do so as safely as possible.

This week, Gov. Larry Hogan announced that [Maryland is reverting to Stage 2](#) of its coronavirus recovery response as cases spike throughout the state, even in rural areas. Restrictions include shorter hours for bars and restaurants, and limiting retail, fitness/recreational center, and religious facility capacity to 50 percent.

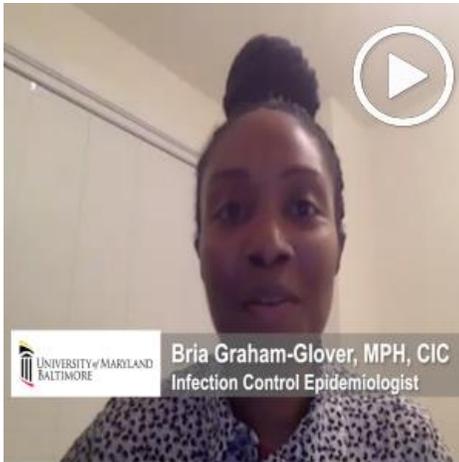
Avoid the crowded bars you might have visited for an impromptu high school reunion the night before Thanksgiving. Forgo the midnight madness and Black Friday lines in stores; shop online instead and prepare for Cyber Monday. Skip the buffet-style family dinner this year, too, as difficult as it might be. Read these tips on [holiday celebrations and small gatherings](#) for ideas on how to make the holiday manageable and safe.

Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

This week's highlights detailed below:

- Contact Tracing at UMB

- UMB Moderna Vaccine Research
- New Testing Policies
- Thanksgiving Travel and Holiday Gatherings Advice
- Video Conferencing Etiquette
- Parents and Caregivers Forums
- Vaccine, I'm Begging of You, Please
- Put a Flu Shot on Your Holiday To-Do List



Contact Tracing at UMB

Locating and isolating high-risk COVID-19 exposures are top of mind for health experts at UMB.

This [deep dive on those efforts](#) outlines how the system works at UMB, and [this video](#) explains the basic concepts of why it's important to cooperate with contact tracers.

UMB infection control epidemiologist **Bria Graham-Glover, MPH, CIC**, shared some key messages for the community in [this short video](#).

Three key reminders:

- Do not eat with colleagues in break rooms. It is the top instance of on-campus exposure. Eat meals



UMB Moderna Vaccine Research

UMB excellence was highlighted again in the news, this time for the Moderna announcement that its COVID-19 vaccine showed 94.5 percent effectiveness.

The University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) participated in [the third phase of trials](#) for the Moderna vaccine as part of Operation Warp Speed.

Here are some featured media appearances:

Matthew Laurens, MD, MPH, principal investigator, explained the news of the Moderna announcement to [WBAL](#) and [WUSA](#).

in your office alone with the door closed, in your car, or alone outside.

- Let the experts determine if you had high-risk exposure to a COVID-19-positive patient. There are so many factors that go into categorizing risk that it could be hard to figure it out alone. One way to help is to be honest with contact tracers about your whereabouts and with whom you interacted.
- Wear a mask *and* practice physical distancing. It shouldn't be an either/or choice.

Karen Kotloff, MD, principal investigator, [*weighed in on the Moderna vaccine*](#) and how it compares to Pfizer's in an interview with WJLA and also spoke with [*WJZ*](#).

Kathleen Neuzil, MD, MPH, director, UMSOM Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health, talked to [*The Washington Post*](#) about the Moderna vaccine.

Milagritos Tapia, MD, professor of pediatrics, [*spoke to Telemundo*](#) about the impact of the Moderna vaccine for populations most affected by COVID-19.

(See if you can spot **UMB President Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**, and other familiar faces in [*this story that aired*](#) on *NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt*.)

New Testing Policies

UMB students and employees have two new testing policies to be mindful of, starting Nov. 30.

In a [*letter to the community*](#), **President Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**, strongly urged UMB students and employees who will be on campus (UMB-owned and -operated facilities in Baltimore, the Universities at Shady Grove, and Donaldson Brown Riverfront Event Center) between Nov. 30 and Dec. 18 to obtain a COVID-19 diagnostic test within that time period.

As of Jan. 1, 2021, each student, faculty, and staff member approved to be on campus will be required to have a COVID-19 test that was taken within 14 days prior to their first day on campus. The negative COVID-19 test result must be uploaded into SAFE on Campus (or Castle Branch) before arriving on campus.

Thanksgiving Travel and Holiday Gatherings Advice

Thanksgiving poses a number of potential pitfalls for the spread of COVID-19 this year. It starts and ends with travel with different types of gatherings in between.

[Review this letter](#) that outlines considerations of risk for scenarios you might face this Thanksgiving.

Please consider to avoid any “Friendsgiving” gatherings, especially ones that take place at bars. The night before Thanksgiving is typically the busiest for bars in America every year, and not every place might be as judicious in monitoring its capacity.

Video Conferencing Etiquette

Want to be a better Zoom attendee? Or run a better Webex meeting?

[The Elm compiled these tips](#) for a better video conferencing experience.

Tips include how to stay on task, establishing a dress code, muting, positioning, and more.

Parents and Caregivers Forums

The [President's Council for Women](#) is presenting a series of virtual open forums for parents and caregivers on balancing work and virtual schooling for children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The forums are open to all UMB faculty, staff, and students.

The first session, *School Hacks*, will take place Dec. 2 at noon, facilitated by **Matt Lasecki, SPHR**, associate vice president and chief human resources officer. [RSVP.](#)

Safe Winter Activities will be the topic Dec. 10 at 1 p.m., hosted by **Aphrodite Bodycomb, MSM, MBA**, associate director of administration and operations, Health Sciences and Human Services Library. [RSVP.](#)

Vaccine, I'm Begging of You, Please

For a lighthearted moment, check out this [ode to the COVID-19 vaccine efforts](#).

It's a parody of Dolly Parton's “Jolene,” called “Vaccine.” (Parton, by the way, donated \$1 million toward COVID-19 vaccine research at Vanderbilt University, with some of those funds applied to Moderna's research.)

Writer Gretchen McCulloch posted these lyrics to Twitter, offering anyone to record a rendition: “Vaccine, vaccine, vaccine, vaccine / I'm begging of you, please go in my arm / Vaccine, vaccine, vaccine, vaccine / Please just keep me safe from COVID harm.”

Ryan Cordell, an English professor at Northeastern University, accepted the challenge, and his Twitter video has gone viral with more than 70,000 views and clips appearing on morning television programs.

Put a Flu Shot on Your Holiday To-Do List

It's better to have a stuffed turkey than a stuffy nose during the holidays, so why not get a flu shot? The UMB flu clinic has five dates available for registration. This year's clinic also offers asymptomatic COVID-19 diagnostic tests.

The sessions are:

- Dec. 2, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Dec. 8, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Dec. 15, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.^[SEP]
- Dec. 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The clinic is located at 635 W. Lexington St. Registration is required and will close when full or at 5 p.m. the day before the start of the session. For more information and to register, visit umaryland.edu/flu.

Please visit umaryland.edu/coronavirus for more information about UMB's COVID-19 policies and recovery.

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