



UMB RECOVERY TASK FORCE



Dec. 10, 2021

Booster shots are the best way to protect yourself and others from serious COVID-19 infection, particularly as new variants such as Omicron emerge, according to **Wilbur Chen, MD, MS**, professor of medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) and an adult infectious disease expert in the school's Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health (CVD).

Chen, who serves as an advisor to Gov. Larry Hogan, an advisor to the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) COVID-19 response team, and a member of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, said this is the best way to protect individuals, co-workers, and family members.

"Completing your primary series with an authorized COVID-19 vaccine remains the best way to protect yourself against the virus and its variants," Chen said. "If it's been six months since your primary series, then your immunity may have declined significantly, so we recommend that you complete your booster dose."

Chen's comments come amid concerns of rising COVID-19 cases and uncertainties over the Omicron variant. Vaccine manufacturers including Pfizer and BioNTech this week announced preliminary

results showing that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine neutralizes the Omicron variant after three doses. “The booster dose is intended to continue to provide you with the best protection against this pandemic. Do it to also protect your friends, family, and neighbors,” Chen said.

He further cautioned that there are other safeguards that should be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses, such as the flu.

“Vaccines do not work alone. Everyone should continue to wear a well-fitting mask when in public spaces with other persons nearby,” Chen said, adding that testing also is critical to reducing the spread of illness, as is staying home and away from work or school.

You can read the rest of Chen's advice as well as tips for holiday gatherings on [The Elm](#).

This week’s highlights detailed below:

- COVID-19 Boosters For Teens
- Tell Us Why You Got the Booster
- Mask Up in All Areas of the Library
- Travel Policy Refresher
- Mental Health Resource of the Week
- KN95 Mask Distribution

On-Campus Vaccination Rates

As of Dec. 7, 2021

**ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYEES
VACCINATED**

**ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS
VACCINATED**

95.62

%

(7,611 Total People)

98.86

%

(6,567 Total People)

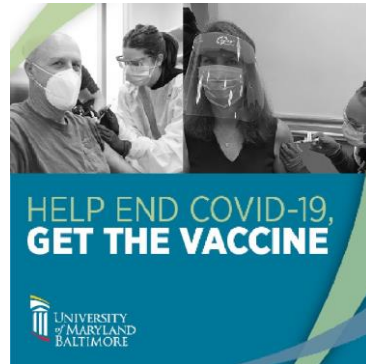
Please visit the COVID-19 Dashboard on the [UMB Recovery website](#) for the latest on-campus COVID-19 vaccination rates and positive cases reported to the [UMB COVID-19 Hotline](#).

If you have any symptoms compatible with COVID-19, please call **1-800-701-9863**.



COVID-19 Boosters For Teens

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster is now authorized and recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Tell Us Why You Got the Booster

At UMB, your thoughts and experiences matter. We need your help to encourage others who are eligible to complete their COVID-19 vaccine series and get the booster shot. Share your story about why receiving the vaccine booster is important to you.

(CDC) for adolescents ages 16 and 17.

This means that everyone 16 years and older is now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine booster. This [CDC chart](#) easily explains who can get a booster, when to get a booster, and which booster to take.

“CDC is strengthening its booster recommendations and encouraging everyone 16 and older to receive a booster shot. Although we don’t have all the answers on the Omicron variant, initial data suggests that COVID-19 boosters help broaden and strengthen the protection against Omicron and other variants,” said CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH. “We know that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and I strongly encourage adolescents ages 16 and 17 to get their booster if they are at least six months post their initial Pfizer vaccination series.”

Tell Us Why You Got the COVID-19 Vaccine Booster and take this opportunity to showcase your story and inspire others on campus. Over the next few months, UMB will be highlighting members of the community and their vaccine booster experience.

Share your experience getting the COVID-19 vaccine/booster by tagging us @umbaltimore and using #UMBVaccinesWork on Twitter or Instagram. Include why you got the vaccine.

You also can submit your photos and comments about your vaccine experience by visiting www.umaryland.edu/cpa/digital-marketing-and-social-media/umbvaccineswork/.



Mask Up in All Areas of the Library

It's great to have a study buddy, but please continue to wear a face covering in all areas of the Health Sciences and Human Services Library (HSHSL) and Thurgood Marshall Law Library.

Whether it's a common area, study room, or reading room, ***your face covering must remain on*** unless you are **alone** in a **closed room**.

In the tower area on the main floor of the HSHSL, only two people are allowed per table, and your mask must go over your nose and mouth immediately after eating.



Travel Policy Refresher

The International Focus Group of UMB's COVID-19 Recovery Task Force is monitoring the Omicron variant and its impact on international travel closely.

The task force will meet in January to review and possibly update international travel guidelines. More information will be shared widely after that meeting.

Please read the following posts for the latest travel protocols:

- [*Additional UMB Travel Guidance*](#)
- [*International Students and Scholars Return to Campus Guidance*](#)



Mental Health Resource of the Week

Need to avoid the holiday blues and stress?

Here are some ***evergreen tips*** from the Center for Injury Prevention and Policy at the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center:

1. Try to keep the same routine. You can also wake up early to enjoy the morning. Consider taking a Vitamin D supplement to give your body what it is missing from spending time in the sun.

2. Remember to drink in moderation and to drink plenty of water. Also, never drink and drive.
3. Allow yourself to say “no.” Throw out the feelings that you should or you must. Really think about which events you actually want to attend.
4. Remember that sleep is just as important as the activities you feel like you need to go to.
5. Remember to make time for yourself and set clear limits.
6. Eat in moderation. If you are going to multiple events in one night, pace yourself. Or eat healthy food before you go out.
7. Create a budget for yourself well before the holidays. Spread out shopping and spending throughout the year. Suggest homemade gifts or spending limits in larger social circles.



KN95 Mask Distribution

The UMB Office of Emergency Management has completed distribution of KN95 masks to schools and units. If you have not received your KN95 mask yet, students should contact their school’s student affairs office, and employees should contact their supervisor.

Visit [this Elm post](#) to know when and where *KN95s are required*.

This [one-stop shop for KN95 answers](#) lists everything you need to know as well as a [video demonstrating](#) how to wear and care for a KN95 mask.

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

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