

Dorchester County Health Department Updates: October 2026

A Quick Note on Seasonal Immunizations: In mid-September 2026, the Maryland Department of Health released statewide 2026-2027 vaccine schedules and recommendations for Maryland's children and adults in advance of the respiratory virus season. The recommendations align with the latest evidence and guidance by leading medical associations. You can view recommended vaccine schedules for both children and adults here: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/IMMUN/Pages/recommendedvaccines.aspx>. Relevant recommendations for adults are listed below:

- **Flu:** MDH recommends one dose of the updated flu shot annually for all adults 19-64. The updated dose should be received by the end of October for optimal protection for the respiratory season. Adults aged 65 and older are recommended to receive a high-dose, recombinant, or adjuvanted shot for stronger protection when available but should not delay vaccination to obtain one. One dose; is also recommended during pregnancy or postpartum, including while breastfeeding; the nasal spray or mRNA vaccine are not recommended during pregnancy.
- **COVID-19:** MDH recommends the annual updated COVID-19 vaccine for all adults ages 19-64. Adults 65 years and older should receive a second dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine 6 months after the initial dose to help maintain protection as immunity wanes over time. It is especially important to get a vaccine if you are 65 years and older, at increased risk for severe COVID-19 infection, or have never received a COVID-19 vaccine. The annual updated COVID-19 vaccine is also recommended during pregnancy or postpartum, including while breastfeeding.
- **RSV:** MDH recommends that adults ages 50 through 74 years who are at high risk receive one dose of RSV vaccine, and all adults 75 years and older receive one dose if they have not previously received the vaccine. It is best to administer in late summer and early fall before RSV spreads in communities. Additional doses are not recommended. Adults under 50 years who are immunocompromised should talk to their health care provider. During pregnancy, a single dose of the RSV vaccine (Abrysvo) is recommended between weeks 32 and 36 of pregnancy, optimally administered from September through March during peak RSV season. Repeat vaccination is not recommended for future pregnancies.

Most respiratory vaccines are now available by appointment at the health department and local pharmacies. We encourage you to talk with your provider about any concerns or whether you fall into certain risk categories. To schedule an appointment for adult immunizations, please call 410-228-3223.

Respiratory Virus Tests: FREE rapid at-home COVID/flu tests remain available to the public M-F from 8am-4:30 pm at 627 Race Street. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need OTC kits or masks for your organization or clients. **Supplies remain limited.**

Please note that drive-Up Rapid PCR tests for flu a&b, covid, and rsv still available at the health department by appointment. Call 410-228-3223 to schedule a same-day appointment.

Fall Rabies Clinic: Get low-cost shots for your pets at the fall 2026 rabies clinics. The Dorchester County Health Department is hosting two upcoming events to help keep your dogs, cats, and ferrets safe and healthy.

- **Wednesday, Oct. 7: 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Church Creek VFD, 1902 Church Creek Road, Church Creek**
- **Saturday, Oct. 10: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at East New Market VFD, 4020 East New Market Bypass, East New Market**

Clinic Details & Safety Guidelines:

Cost: \$5 per pet

Eligible Animals: Dogs, cats, and ferrets

Safety Protocols: Keep all dogs on a leash. Put all cats and ferrets in a carrier.

Have questions? Call Kimberly Keene at 410-228-1167.

Quarterly STB with Shock Trauma Partners: Minutes count! Someone severely bleeding from an injury, such as a car crash, gunshot, or accidental wound, can bleed to death in as little as five minutes. Our Next Public Training with the Shock Trauma Team will be held on Wednesday, October 14, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Dorchester County Health Department (627 Race St., Cambridge, MD). Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/Stop-the-Bleed-Oct-14-Cambridge>. You will get a free STB kit for completing the training.

DCHD Climate and Health: Help us shape the Dorchester County Health Department's Climate Action Plan by sharing your priorities, concerns, and ideas regarding environmental sustainability and resilience. Take our survey here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc-H0OuL9iiKX2Ikc3V2QadT2TgsN13puEdm1LjvF5cp6Mmbg/viewform>.

Upcoming Outreach Events: As always, we encourage everyone to come out and get some great health info. Please see the upcoming health events below, which include programming from various DCHD programs and events held by our health & social service-focused community partners:

- Saturday, October 3, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Hurlock Fall Festival (Seasonal Vaccines Available!)
- Wednesday, October 7, 1 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., Walk Maryland Day -- Check out the promotional flyer and grab your walking shoes!
- Wednesday, October 7, 3 p.m. to 8 p.m., Cambridge Police Dept. National Night Out (@ Gerry Boyle Park in Cambridge)
- Friday, October 9, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., St. Paul's Health Fair @ 205 Maryland Ave, Cambridge, MD (Flu Shots Available!)
- Thursday, Oct. 15, 5 to 6:30 p.m., DRI-Dock Recovery Connections
- Thursday, October 22, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., DRI-Dock Community Fun Night
- Saturday, October 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Prescription Drug Take Back Day @ Hurlock Volunteer Fire Department, 300 Charles St, Hurlock, MD 21643, USA

Community Updates:

- **The Mid-Shore Health Improvement Coalition** will be hosting a **Food is Medicine in Maryland Medicaid Listening Session** from 12pm-2pm at Talbot County Health Department [510 Cadmus Lane, Easton, MD 21601) (**informational flyer attached**)
- **Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center Fall CHW Cohort Starts Oct 19th - Complete Interest Form by October 12th:** 📌 Become a Community Health Worker! Are you passionate about helping others and making a difference in your community? ESAHEC's next MDH Accredited Community Health Worker Training begins October 19, 2026, and will be offered virtually! Community Health Workers serve as trusted bridges between individuals, healthcare providers, and community resources—helping people navigate services, access care, and build healthier communities. Complete the interest form by October 12, 2026! tinyurl.com/esahec-CHW-pif
- **Dorchester County Public Library** is seeking community partners interested in attending our Winter Resource Fair on **Tuesday, December 22, 2026, from 3:30-5pm in the Cambridge Library Meeting Room**. This event is intended to highlight alternative resources available to the community while the Cambridge Library temporarily closes for

a capital grant flood remediation flooring repair project this winter. If you would like to attend the Winter Resource Fair, please let me know or email Hannah Smutny at hsmutny@dorchesterlibrary.org. The flyer is attached with more details. Those who have already signed on to attend: John Dabney with the City of Cambridge, Midshore Meals till Monday, Delmarva Community Services, and the Dorchester County Health Department! Please share this email and information with anyone who may be interested in participating. Promotional flyer is attached.