



**Maryland Retired School Personnel Association**

**CONSUMER CONNECTION**

A Publication of the MRSPA Consumer Education  
Committee

**May-June, 2024**

**May is National Mental Health Awareness Month.**

**Maryland's Helpline offers 24/7 call, chat, and text support for Marylanders in need of help, guidance, and information related to behavioral health concerns. Trained call specialists can provide crisis intervention, risk assessment for suicide, homicide, or overdose prevention, and assistance linking to community behavioral health providers and accessing community resources.**

**To get connected to Maryland's Helpline, call 211 and press 1, text your zip code to 898-211, or visit [211.md.org](https://211.md.org).**



**Take the risk assessment on page 2 from NIH to determine if you need assistance.**

**2023-2024 MRSPA CONSUMER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

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# My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



## Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



## If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.



## Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm



## Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)—virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Medications
- Brain stimulation therapies

For help finding treatment, visit [www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you are in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).



**NIH** National Institute  
of Mental Health

[www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp)





**Maryland's Department of Aging offers a variety of services to senior citizens in need of support.**

Maryland's Aging and Disability Resource Center, also known as MAP, helping Older Adults, Individuals with Disabilities, and Caregivers navigate long-term support services is proudly supported by the Maryland Department of Aging. For more information about the Maryland Department of Aging's programs and service, visit [aging.maryland.gov](http://aging.maryland.gov)

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**Do you need medical equipment, or have medical equipment to donate, visit Maryland Department of Aging at the information below for valuable resources.**



**Maryland  
Durable Medical  
Equipment  
Re-Use**

## ***The Gift of Mobility***

**Donate or Receive Durable Medical Equipment**



**DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT EXAMPLES:**  
Wheelchairs, Power Chairs, Rollators, Scooters, Walkers, Shower Chairs, Canes, Crutches, Hospital Beds, "Hoyer" Lifts, Tub Transfer Benches, and Much More!

**DONATIONS WILL BE:**

- Sanitized
- Repaired
- Provided to adults and children with mobility needs

**Please contact us:**

 240-230-8000

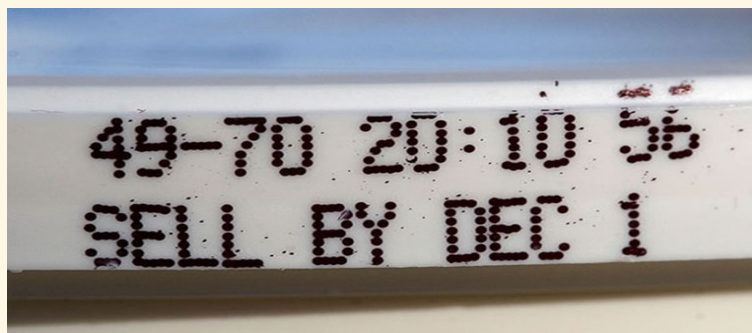
 [dme.mdoa@maryland.gov](mailto:dme.mdoa@maryland.gov)

**LEARN MORE**



**Maryland**  
DEPARTMENT OF AGING

**Food costs are still high and if you have food in your pantry, you might not be sure about when to discard, and if it's ok to donate.**



**Sell By:** **These dates are for the stores to manage their inventory.** This stamp indicates how long a product should be on the shelves. These foods are generally safe to eat after the date but may lose flavor or even eye appeal. Normally you'll see this stamp on things the store expects you to eat within a few days of purchasing.



**Use By and Best By:** **These stamps are used interchangeably and are not about safety. Those dates are about peak quality and freshness.** That date is what the manufacturer says is the best time to eat the food. If that date has passed, you're probably still OK to eat it.

While these stamps aren't about safety, you can still get sick from eating certain foods that have spoiled. So, if it looks, smells or feels off (texture), throw it away!

Advice from Jeff Rossen—Rossen Reports

When cleaning out your pantry to donate, remember, please don't donate foods that are expired to food pantries. They will have to take additional time to discard them.



Follow your local recycle guidelines to dispose of food and containers that are out of date.



**Summer is coming and so are Summer storms. Keep safe when outside.**

# Lightning

## Do's and Don'ts

### Do

Go Inside When You Hear Thunder or See Lightning!

Find a Sturdy House, Building, Car With A Roof

Stay Indoors For at Least 30 Minutes After You Last Hear Thunder



### Don't

Retreat to Dugouts, Sheds, Pavilions, Picnic Shelters or Other Small Structures

Use or Touch Electronics, Outlets, Corded Phones or Windows

Go Under or Near Tall Trees, Swim or Be Near Water, Stand Near Metal Objects



[weather.gov/lightning](https://weather.gov/lightning)



## Save some money! Great buys for May and June!

**May**—Look for major sales around Memorial Day weekend. It's one of the biggest shopping weekends of the year. You'll find deals on mattresses, grills, air conditioners, paints, etc.

**June**—Home improvement items like tools go on sale around Father's Day



And don't forget to support your Local farmers! Farmer's Markets will be starting up and you can get some fabulous, fresh produce while helping your local farmers.

[www.visitmaryland.org/things-do/buy-local-maryland-farmers-markets](http://www.visitmaryland.org/things-do/buy-local-maryland-farmers-markets)

You can also find information about Maryland's Best Ice Cream Trail! Your guide for the best ice cream in Maryland

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## How many R's can you think of to reduce waste and save resources?

**Reflect** - Reflect on ways that you may be able to reduce the amount of waste that you create throughout the day.

**Refill**—Avoid using disposable single-use items, and choose reusable items when possible.

**Regrow**—Give composting a try and compost your food scraps and food—soiled paper at home or drop them off at a community recycling center.

**Rehome**—Donate edible food and unwanted clothes, furniture, toys and other household items to local charitable organizations.

**Repair**—Repair before you replace items. Give old or worn items a new life by repairing the item or repurposing the item for a new use.

**Relay**—Share waste reduction tips with your family and friends.



The Maryland Attorney General's Office is warning about **scam election calls**. The attorney general said the scams typically involve robocalls that impersonate real political campaigns or candidates to deceive voters, manipulate choices and potentially disrupt the voting process.

### Information for voting:

To vote by mail, you must [request a mail-in ballot](#) from the State Board of Elections or [your local board](#). Your request for a mail-in ballot for the Presidential Primary Election must be submitted as follows:

- If you want to receive your ballot by mail or fax, your request must be received (not just mailed) by Tuesday, May 7, 2024.
- If you want to receive your ballot via the internet, your request must be received by 5 pm, Friday, May 10, 2024 for a request sent in the mail, or by 11:59 pm, Friday, May 10, 2024 for a request sent by fax or submitted online.

If you hand deliver your request and the ballots are ready, you can pick up your mail-in ballot. You may take your mail-in ballot with you and return it by mail or you can vote it at the local board office and give it to an election official. The deadline to request a mail-in ballot in person is election day, May 14, 2024. Please visit your local board of elections' website for hours of operation.

Mail-in ballots must be postmarked or placed in a designated ballot drop box by **8 pm on May 14, 2024** for the Presidential Primary Election.

To vote in person, Marylanders can vote during early voting or on election day:

For the 2024 Presidential Primary Election, early voting will be available from **Thursday, May 2, 2024** through **Thursday, May 9, 2024** (including Saturday and Sunday) from **7 am to 8 pm**. You can vote early at any early voting center in the county you live in .

The Presidential Primary Election day is May 14, 2024 from 7 am to 8 pm. To vote in person on election days, vote at your assigned polling place.

Below you will find information on:

- Request a Mail-in Ballot (must be received by **May 14, 2024** for the Presidential Primary Election)
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- Vote by Mail (Mail-in Ballot)
- Vote Early (**Thursday, May 2, 2024 - Thursday, May 9, 2024**)
- Vote on Election Day (Presidential Primary Election Day is **May 14, 2024**.)



## **Summer is right around the corner—Thursday, June 20th!**

Nice weather also brings out more scammers! Those individuals that might approach you in your yard, offering to do home improvements, driveway sealing or repaving or landscaping jobs at **incredibly** low prices! If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is! Here are some red flags to spot a potential scammer:

- Refusal to provide a contractor's license and insurance documentation
- Vague on project details, materials, timeline
- No references from satisfied recent customers or the Better Business Bureau
- Total cost of quote far lower than other contractors' estimates
- Requires a very large down payment or credit card upfront
- Only provides a verbal agreement, not a written contract
- Won't pull required permits for the work
- Asks you to obtain materials yourself
- Old, worn vehicles and equipment



**If you notice any of these warning signs, you should politely end the discussion and look for an honest, qualified general contractor or repairman to take on your project.**

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It's Annual Business Meeting time!! If you're attending the meeting, don't forget to stop by our table! We'll have great information and would love to talk to you!



**Your MRSPA Consumer Education Committee Cares About You!!**