Howard County
Health Department

What to Expect at a Point of Dispensing (POD)

During a widespread outbreak of a disease or release of a bioterrorism agent, such as anthrax, Maryland has established plans in place to distribute medications and other supplies to local communities as quickly as possible. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will work with local health departments to establish points of dispensing (PODs). These PODs are locations where individuals can go to pick up medications to prevent themselves from getting sick. This fact sheet explains what to expect if you are instructed by officials to go to a POD during a public health emergency.

Large Crowds and Long Lines
Literally thousands of citizens will be reporting to these locations within a short period of time. Be prepared for large crowds and long lines. Be patient and courteous.

Tight Security
The POD needs to be safe and secure. Law enforcement personnel will be present in large numbers, some in uniform and others providing less visible security. **You must** cooperate with them at all times. This will expedite the medicine distribution process.

News Media
Reporters will be at many locations and may want to ask you questions. If you choose to be interviewed, please work with POD staff members to accommodate reporters. Staff members may be working to keep media activities orderly and away from other essential distribution activities.

Questions and Answers
Local health department representatives will be wearing identification. Official staff members will be stationed at well-marked locations. They will be able to answer questions and distribute forms. Please be patient and be courteous while waiting to talk with these representatives.

General Advice

- Be prepared to answer health questions to obtain medicine for all family members.
- You may pick up medication for elderly or disabled neighbors or friends who may have trouble getting to the POD site.
- Do not bring children; only a designated head of household is to report to POD.
- Do not bring pets. However, service animals are permitted to enter the facility.
- Bring nonperishable, snack food items such as dried fruit, nuts, crackers, energy bars and other such items to sustain you for long hours.
- Bring reading material, such as a book, magazine or crossword puzzles, to occupy your time in line.
- Cellphone use may be restricted to ensure that essential emergency personnel can communicate onsite. Signs will direct you to turn off your cellphone if necessary.