



# THE DIAMONDBACK

CAMPUS NEWS

## Sick meals prove useful amid pandemic, some UMD students want more dining flexibility

**Auzinea Bacon** · October 7, 2021

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A meal from the South Campus Dining Hall on Oct. 6, 2021. (Freddy Wolfe/The Diamondback)

The University of Maryland Dining Services is offering “sick meals” for students with dining plans in case students don’t want to eat in the dining halls while sick.

The sick meals have been offered since 2016 at the South Campus Dining Hall and North Campus Dining Hall in the Ellicott Community, but they are different from COVID-19 quarantine meals, said dining services spokesperson Bart Hipple.

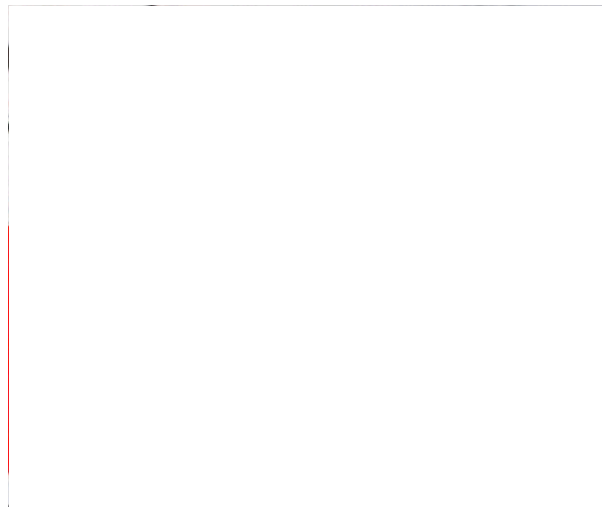


“We do understand that there may be a time or two when a student is not feeling well enough to come to the dining hall and have a meal,” Hipple said.

The program has been especially helpful for students this academic year, with students’ fears about getting sick heightened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Dining Services website, two sick meals are offered: breakfast, and a lunch and dinner meal.

The breakfast meal consists of scrambled eggs, toast, a banana and juice. The lunch and dinner meals are grilled chicken breast, rice, a green vegetable, a drink and cookies.



Students can also request vegan options for their meals, Hipple said. If a student wants a sick meal, they can fill out a form on the Dining Services website and send someone to pick it up for them.

***[To preserve student health, UMD’s dining halls need to reinstate the takeout option]***

Hipple said when a student comes to pick up a sick meal on someone else’s behalf, they can walk up to the employee greeting students at the door, who will then give the individual the meal.

“They go online, and they select sick meal and complete the form, which will tell us which dining hall to expect them at, what time and where to pick them up,” Hipple said.

Andy Lu, a freshman management major, said he was glad the sick meal option exists since they’ve had concerns about COVID-19.

Lu said he was glad the sick meal option exists since they’ve had concerns about COVID-19. However, Lu still

thinks more needs to be done for students.

“I know that they have outdoor seating and de-densified areas, but I think it’s not enough,” they said.

“I think more needs to be done such as the takeout option.”

Last year, due to the pandemic, the university’s dining halls offered takeout for students to eat in their dorms. Since returning to full capacity this year, the university has reverted back to Anytime Dining and self-serve options for students.

### ***[UMD President Darryll Pines hosts webinar with Philonise Floyd, George Floyd’s brother]***

While sophomore public health major Molola Adewole said the sick meals were a good idea, she wishes takeout options were brought back. Adewole also didn’t know about the sick meals until this year.

“I don’t think that you have to resort to being sick to be able to take your food outside of the dining hall, because some people ... they’re not comfortable yet to be out in the open, even in classes,” she said.

As someone who was exposed to COVID-19 only a few weeks ago, Lu said the university should be clearer about how close contacts should eat meals. They were told to continue eating in the dining hall, but Lu said he didn’t feel comfortable doing so.

“It wasn’t something that felt ethical to be knowingly, potentially exposing other people in the dining halls,” he said. “I think they should make protocols more clear and more strict.”

Lu said the policy and administration should reflect these changes in how people feel about spreading diseases in general. Lu added that he and his friends have been concerned about eating in dining halls while people are sick, especially since people eat without masks in dining halls.

“Just in general, the pandemic has brought us into a new era of being sensitive to disease and spreading disease,” Lu said. “It de

✗ world around us.”

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