



A Message to the Community from the Medical Staff at Houlton Regional Hospital

We, the Medical Staff of Houlton Regional Hospital, who are also parents, neighbors, and members of the Greater Houlton Community, have seen and continue to see what COVID-19 has done to some of our fellow area residents. In the past few months there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of cases, and this is primarily due to the vaccine effort and the vaccine's effect on reducing infections.

Fortunately, the vaccine is free of charge and readily available. We have all endured a difficult past year with social distancing, masking, and staying at home. We are writing this letter to ask for your continued support in reducing the cases even more by getting vaccinated or, if already vaccinated, encouraging others around you to do the same. We are quite concerned about the health of unvaccinated members of our community. Even with the reduced number of infections, they are still occurring in unvaccinated people and some of you may get very sick with COVID-19. We continue to see area residents die from this disease.

We understand there is a lot of information and, unfortunately, misinformation available regarding the vaccines. We want to assure you these vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective in preventing serious disease and death.

The vaccines underwent the same level of scrutiny and study any other vaccine has had with the only difference being this occurred in an expedited fashion. No corners were cut. In Maine alone over 1.5 million doses have been given. Here are our answers to some of the questions we have heard:

Will the shot make me sick?

It is common to have some minor effects from the shot, such as soreness, and mild redness at the injection site. Some people have experienced tiredness, headaches, and fever. These are all very short in duration, usually 1-2 days. These effects are actually a good indication your body is responding to the vaccine.

Will the shot affect my fertility?

There is no evidence nor is there any concern the vaccine would decrease your fertility. During the studies, some women became pregnant without any negative effects.

Will the shot cause problems if I am or become pregnant?

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends the vaccine for all women including those who are pregnant. Many women have now received the vaccine while pregnant or discovered they were pregnant soon after receiving the vaccine and no concerns have been noted.

Houlton Regional Hospital continues to make the vaccine available including Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson. In addition to our two weekly clinics, beginning in July we will have the vaccines available during routine office visits.

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