



DOWNEAST COVID-19 TASK FORCE

Mount Desert Island

COVID-19 Vaccination FAQ

Updated: 2/2/21

1. Is there currently an effective and safe vaccine for COVID-19?

Yes. There are currently two types of vaccinations that have been vetted through the U.S. FDA and authorized for emergency use. The two vaccines were developed by Pfizer and Moderna. Both are Messenger Ribonucleic Acid vaccines that instruct your body to produce tiny amounts of incomplete viral protein and then react, creating immunity. MDI Hospital has been receiving supplies of Moderna since December 22. Both are highly effective.

2. Does the vaccination stop the Coronavirus?

Yes, both vaccines are over 90% effective in preventing disease and over 95% effective at preventing severe disease. There is also evidence that it prevents you from infecting others, but more study is needed to put a firm number on that.

3. What are the vaccine phases and when will community members receive vaccinations?

Because vaccine supply is currently limited, the Federal Government has sent advice to states suggesting priority order of vaccination and the States then set their priorities for providers to follow. On January 13, the State of Maine updated its vaccine distribution strategy, which prioritizes older residents, those with underlying conditions, emergency service personnel, healthcare workers, and others critical to Maine's COVID-19 response. Current information on the State of Maine's vaccine phases can be found on the State's COVID-19 vaccine webpage: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/phases>.

4. Who will notify me when it is my turn to get vaccinated?

Community members will be notified in a variety of ways when vaccine is available—including public announcements, website postings and information at providers' offices and clinics. There are many vaccination clinics across Maine you may be able to access. MDI Hospital is now offering pre-registration to those in our region who qualify to receive the COVID-19 vaccination in the State of Maine.

Pre-registration is available on MDI Hospital's COVID-19 vaccine webpage:

<https://www.mdihospital.org/covid-19-vaccine>. For assistance completing the form, call our Coronavirus Call Center at 207-801-5900. Due to the limited supply of vaccine, a timeline for available doses cannot be provided. Those who complete the form will be contacted when a dose becomes available for them. Do not share this invitation, it will result in appointments being cancelled. Currently MDI Hospital is receiving zero to 200 doses each week and we have several thousand people pre-registered. Per State guidelines, we are starting with the oldest, those with severe medical conditions and health care workers. Thank you for your patience as we await an increase in state and national supply of vaccine.

5. Does the vaccination have the Coronavirus in it?

No. There is no coronavirus or any other virus in either the Pfizer or Moderna product. You cannot catch or transmit any infection from this vaccine.

6. Will I need to get more than one shot?

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses for full, long-lasting protection. Pfizer doses are three weeks apart, Moderna four weeks. There are more vaccines in the authorization process, some of which only require one dose to be effective.

7. How long will the vaccination be good for me?

The duration of protection is not known, but likely will be years. Most vaccine researchers think periodic revaccination will be needed to boost immunity and cover new variants.

8. Will there be enough for everyone in our community?

Yes, eventually, though that may not be until late in 2021. Speed of manufacture and distribution, along with when other candidate vaccines become available and authorized will determine this.

9. Will I experience vaccination side effects?

Many people will experience discomfort including pain at the injection site, and occasionally, malaise, achiness, and fever, especially after the second shot. This is more common in those under 55 and is due to your normal immune response. In the trials, there were no serious adverse events with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. During the millions of doses given in the last month, we have seen severe allergic reactions in about 11 recipients out of each million doses, usually in persons with a history of prior severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. Persons with a history of severe allergy are asked to stay and be observed for 30 minutes after their shot. You may take over the counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Motrin), or naprosyn (Aleve) after the shot. Current guidance from the CDC recommends waiting to see if symptoms develop after the vaccine.

10. I've heard there is a new strain of COVID-19. What should I know about it, and will the vaccine cover it?

There are several new strains that have changes in the spike protein enabling the virus to better stick to and enter your cells. This makes the virus more contagious. It may also make the virus more destructive once you are sick with it and more likely to spread it. Our current vaccines appear to provide adequate coverage against these variants, but as the virus evolves the vaccines will likely need to be updated.

11. What can my family and I do to keep safe between now and when it's our turn to get the vaccine?

- Continue to wear a mask whenever in a building with persons other than your household. The mask stops most of the larger droplets that can carry millions of viruses in a bundle into your nose and lungs.
- Wear a mask outside if you are within 6 feet of another person.
- Make sure your mask is well fitted and either double layer or medical grade. Adding a face shield or goggles can provide eye protection when worn with a mask in at-risk environments.
- Avoid unnecessary exposures to breathing air other people have breathed.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from those outside your household whenever possible.
- Wash or sanitize your hands after touching commonly touched surfaces.
- Avoid entering places where others are not wearing masks. Clear plastic face shields are not masks.

12. If I have received the vaccine, do I still need to wear a mask/take other precautions?

Yes, currently scientific guidance is that we should continue to take precautions until either all in the community have been offered the vaccine or we are certain that the vaccine prevents individuals from being able to spread the virus. Also, the vaccine isn't fully effective until about two weeks after the second shot. For the foreseeable future, continue to follow COVID-19 safety measures, as outlined above. Your safety and the safety of those around you depend on it.

13. I keep hearing that COVID doesn't affect young people. Is this true?

COVID-19 has caused more Line-of Duty deaths for police than shootings, vehicle accidents, and all other causes combined in the past year. Coronavirus is the leading cause of occupational death for Firefighters and EMS. Also, a recent study of 1733 patients hospitalized early in the outbreak showed three-fourths still with significant symptoms, including 63% with muscle weakness or fatigue. COVID-19 can seriously affect people of all ages, including those without underlying conditions. Please be safe, take precautions, and get the vaccine when it is your turn.