



Town of Chebeague Island

192 North Road, Chebeague Island, ME 04017

September 15, 2021

Dear Chebeague Island Community:

As you may have heard, several members of the Chebeague Island community have tested positive with COVID-19. As I write this letter, we are aware of 6 positive cases. If more than 3 cases are linked to several households, the CDC will investigate to determine if this is an outbreak with community spread.

The highly contagious Delta variant is currently the main strain of COVID-19 affecting the entire United States. It is responsible for the spike in COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the summer. [According to the CDC, the Delta variant may cause more than twice as many infections](#) and causes more severe illness in unvaccinated people. The most contagious period is two-days before a person tests positive or shows symptoms, however many cases may have no symptoms and are still contagious.

As part of the testing protocol done by the volunteer island testing team, people with positive cases are advised to be in touch with their primary care provider (PCP). Folks who are positive are also expected to be in quarantine.

In addition, anyone testing positive is advised to immediately notify any people they've been in contact with in the last two days (also known as contact tracing) as soon as they test positive. Ill persons should isolate until test results return as well as symptoms lessen, and follow the advice of their PCP.

Vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, and J & J) are still highly effective in preventing Delta variant infections and serious health outcomes, including death. Approximately 95% of the current COVID-19 cases in Maine are affecting unvaccinated people. Of the 44,000 COVID cases in Maine since the introduction of the vaccines, only 2246 have been breakthrough infections. The chance of a vaccinated person contracting COVID-19 from an encounter with an infected person is 1 in 5000.

However, as of today, our current COVID-19 cases are “breakthrough” cases hitting vaccinated islanders. So far, COVID-19 infections for vaccinated people are known to be much less severe, shorter lasting, and transmissible for a shorter period of time. In most cases, the symptoms of breakthrough cases can be managed at home.

The good news is, according to the Maine CDC, more than 95% of eligible residents in 04017 are vaccinated. With our high rate of vaccination, our fast-response CCTT team and the actions of those who tested positive— the current situation could likely have had more dire consequences. Thank you to the residents for protecting each other.

So, what is the best thing you can do today to minimize your risk of “getting it or spreading it”?

- 1) get vaccinated (12+ years old)
- 2) wear a mask indoors in public spaces (or when you don't know the status of those around you)
- 3) maintain social distancing (including in outdoor gatherings)
- 4) contact your PCP if you have symptoms or think you were exposed and get tested
- 5) contact anyone you had close contact with in the 48 hour window around any COVID-19 symptoms or if you have gotten a positive test result

If you cannot reach your PCP, you may also contact our volunteer Chebeague Covid Testing Team (CCTT), Jenny Hackel, NP at 734-660-3461 or Nancy Hill, RN at 207-712-3184. Our testers have PCR and rapid tests for those who have been exposed and for those who have symptoms. You may also make an appointment for drive-through testing at the Walgreens in Yarmouth or obtain your own over-the-counter.

Remember, if you do experience COVID-19 symptoms and test positive for COVID-19, it is important that you isolate, even from those in your household. This can be hard, but it is important. Secondly, you should notify everyone you were in contact with as soon as possible so they can test, isolate and recover. Additional information on what to do if you test positive can be found on the Maine CDC webpage located [here](#).

CDC guidelines recommend wearing a mask indoors in areas of substantial or high transmission. Masks work best when everyone wears one. A cloth or disposable mask offers some protection but a KN95 mask offers the highest level of protection. The Town is making KN95 masks available to all community members at the Town Office, Rec Center and Library.

As I write this letter, every county in Maine is currently facing the Delta variant's impact. Wearing a mask, even if you are vaccinated, will maximize protection from the Delta variant and will minimize the spread to others (including when you are outdoors and could be in close contact with those who are not fully vaccinated).

Please continue to practice physical distancing with those who are not in your household or pod. As we move into the fall and winter let's all do our part; stay vigilant, follow best practices, and be kind to one another.

Sincerely,

Justin L. Poirier
Town Administrator