

8-30-21

Dear Winchester & Ashuelot Residents,

We were hoping that the May health update would be that last, but times have dictated that due to the Delta variant an update is in order. Most of us have gone on with our regular lives but do it just a little bit differently. Some avoid large crowds, some only hang with vaccinated folks or some just keep with their usual intimate circle. It is smart to think twice about where you go and how to prepare. Some venues are requiring mask wearing and others are not. Our advice is to consider wearing a mask and stand a little farther apart from others especially if you are not vaccinated.

Vaccinations are critical in fighting this virus. Winchester has some of the lowest rates of vaccinations in the state. Only 37.7% of residents have received their second dose. Why are people not getting vaccinated? Are they afraid of it? Do they have access to get one? Do people know they are free? Do people not believe in it? Do people realize how easy it is now? No matter what the reason, please think about getting vaccinated. More and more of us are realizing this virus is very real and is deadly. Most of us read and listen to a variety of information from many different sources. This is good because this issue shouldn’t be political. It is important to digest information from various sources to make an informed decision. But be careful there is some really kooky information out there such as taking the animal medication Ivermectin in the treatment for covid. **Do Not** take Ivermectin, you are not a farm animal! If we haven’t had covid we know someone who has. The faces you see on TV and in print describing how deathly sick they were and regretting not getting vaccinated are true. We have seen and heard this ourselves in person. This virus is here and is not a joke. Just ask someone who has had it.

Going into the fall, the weather will be changing, and we’ll be heading indoors. Transmission of the virus will be easier. The odds are covid cases will continue to increase until more people are vaccinated. Vaccination is not a guarantee you won’t get covid, but it is very likely you won’t end up in the hospital on a ventilator. The vaccine also helps in decreasing the number of variants.

Presently there are 13 active cases in Winchester. How sad, just a few weeks ago we had none. All counties in the state have substantial transmissions. Our hospitals are seeing an increase in patients. Thankfully we do not have the number of cases as our southern states do, but that can easily happen here.

If you decide to go to an amusement park, a concert or a festival, do go, but use preventative measures. Wear as mask when in close contact with people, try to maintain at least a 3 foot distance, use hand sanitizer, and most important, if you don’t feel well stay home. Quarantining and isolation are still required for those who have covid and for those exposed.