

Town of Middlebury  
Emergency Management Bulletin  
February 5, 2021

**So You Had A COVID Test And It Was Negative**

You went to a testing site and two days later you received a notification that starts like this:

*This letter is to inform you of your negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test result. The SARS-CoV-2 virus (the virus that causes coronavirus disease) was not detected in the specimen collected by the Vermont Department of Health on 02-03-2021.*

This is a pretty good result, but doesn't mean you can carry on with reckless abandon. In any kind of testing, the most critical part is the collection of a sample. If sample collection is incomplete or otherwise compromised, you can get a negative test result. For those with young children, you'll understand this- the little one is happily playing in their room when it gets suddenly quiet. You go into the room and the child is nowhere to be seen. Your 'sample' in this case is what you can see. Come to find out the little one crawled under the bed to chase the cat or something. It's the same with COVID sampling. A negative test means the sample was negative- a pretty good indication that you were COVID free at the time, but it is not an ultimate fact. The little COVID bug could be in there somewhere.

And the test result is only valid at the instant the sample was taken. If you were infected a few days prior, it may still show up negative. And it certainly doesn't mean that going forward you're COVID free. So it's best to get tested regularly, to at least establish a baseline, especially if you're in regular contact with others.

**Yes, You Should Wear Your Mask Even After The Vaccine**

The vaccine has at best a 95% efficacy. That means it is not 100% effective for everyone. Secondly, the vaccine is not a shield. You can still pick up and retain infected aerosols and spew them out to others. The vaccine essentially keeps the virus from replicating in your system and making you ill. Vaccinated or not, you can still be the COVID version of Typhoid Mary. A study has been released, without peer review, that indicates there is a 67% reduction in the prevalence of COVID in nose swabs of those who have been exposed to COVID after they have been immunized. This is an initial, limited study only. So until the guidelines are pulled back, and don't expect that until we approach 85% herd immunity, you should still practice all the current safety protocols- mask up, social distancing, wash hands often and thoroughly, avoid crowded spaces.

**Sporting Competition Is Back!**

Commencing Friday the 12<sup>th</sup>, interscholastic and youth sports teams can once again engage in competition. This is limited to two(2) games in any seven day period with at least 3 days in between games. No spectators are allowed, only players, coaches, and others involved in managing or documenting the game – scorekeepers, refs, the person operating the “sin bin” at hockey games and the like.

**Going Forward**

After the great unpleasantness of 2020, the year 2021 could be a year of celebration. Follow the bulletins from Jim Gish as the downtown rebuild enters its final stage; the rail platform moves forward; and we hope, COVID will diminish. A lot to look forward to as we course our way out of the darkness of winter! Stay the course, and stay safe and healthy.