



Media Information:

For immediate release:

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RiverStone Health pauses J&J vaccinations

Billings, MT – RiverStone Health, Yellowstone County’s public health agency, paused use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine today, in accordance with advice issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration.

This pause is a precaution to maintain the highest safety standards for COVID-19 vaccination. The CDC and FDA are investigating six cases of a rare blood clotting disorder reported after 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine have been given in the United States. All six cases were reported in women between the ages of 18 and 48 who became ill 6-13 days after receiving the J&J vaccine.

Most of the tens of thousands of doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered by RiverStone Health and through the Yellowstone County Unified Health Command community clinics has been Pfizer vaccine, and secondly Moderna vaccine. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines aren’t affected by the CDC and FDA advice on the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are a different type of vaccine than the Johnson & Johnson product.

RiverStone Health, Montana State University Billings and Rocky Mountain College had scheduled J&J vaccination clinics for this week. About 140 doses were administered at the campus clinics on Monday and 140 doses were scheduled for today, until the vaccination pause was ordered.

RiverStone Health has administered about 90 doses of J&J COVID-19 vaccine through public health and outreach to patients in home care, hospice and persons experiencing homelessness. A clinic for 20 senior apartment residents was scheduled for later this week.

Yellowstone County has received a relatively small number of doses of the J&J product, compared with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which have been available for more months and in greater quantities through the state of Montana’s allocation process.

The information about how many doses of J&J COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Yellowstone County through direct federal allocation to retail pharmacies and federal healthcare agencies is unknown.

The CDC and FDA issued this guidance for individuals who received the J&J vaccine:

- For people who got the vaccine more than a month ago, the risk to you is very low at this time.
- For people who recently got the vaccine within the last few weeks, if you develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath, contact your healthcare provider and seek medical treatment.

The FDA and CDC statement recommends that people who have appointments with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines continue with their appointment.

People with J&J vaccine appointments will need to be rescheduled.

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