



## Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) December 8, 2020

New or updated information is in red and bold.

This update is available online at [healthvermont.gov/covid19](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19)  
Click the “See the Latest Update” button.

Please visit the Vermont Department of Health’s COVID-19 web and data pages  
[healthvermont.gov/covid19](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19)

### **Health Department to begin text notifications to close contacts**

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, announced Tuesday that the Health Department this week will launch a new text notification system for certain people who have been identified as close contacts by someone who has COVID-19.

“This will help us get information out as quickly as possible, so these close contacts can quarantine right away and access other important information on our website,” Dr. Levine said at a press conference. “Please know that the texts do not replace our expert contact tracing work – everyone identified as a close contact will still get a phone call from a contact tracer.”

The phone numbers we use to text people will be provided by the person who has COVID-19.

Determination of who get these texts will be made by the contact tracing team based on the situation, Dr. Levine said, adding “Not everyone will get a text, but if you do, please know it is a legitimate and important message from the Vermont Department of Health.”

People who receive the Health Department text will see two short messages from the number 89361. *(NOTE: this number has been updated from what was initially announced at the Tuesday press conference)*

The text will tell them:

- they may be a close contact
- to expect a call from a contact tracer
- to quarantine right away, and
- to visit our website for more information: [healthvermont.gov/closecontact](https://healthvermont.gov/closecontact).

“We hope that by using this new communication tool, Vermonters can start preparing quickly to take steps to protect themselves and others around them,” Dr. Levine said. “Thank you in advance for answering the call and helping slow the spread of COVID-19 in Vermont.”

## Take Care of Your Emotional and Mental Health

If you or someone you know is in crisis or needs emotional support, help is available 24/7:

- Call your [local mental health crisis line](#).
- Text VT to 741741 to talk with someone at the [Crisis Text Line](#).
- Call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255.
- For more information visit [healthvermont.gov/suicide](http://healthvermont.gov/suicide).
- Visit our [Coping With Stress](#) web page.
- Get connected to Alcohol and Drug Support Services at [VT Helplink](#).
- Get self-help tips and connect to mental health services at [COVID Support VT](#).

## Need to be connected to food resources?

One in three Vermonters are at risk for food insecurity, struggling to find help feeding their families.

If your financial situation has recently changed, you may now qualify for Vermont nutrition and food programs. They include: WIC program (Women, Infants and Children), 3SquaresVT/SNAP, and more. Newer programs such as Farmers to Families and Everyone Eats are helping to fill the gaps. All these programs can help keep healthy food on the table.

Contact the [Health Department](#), [Hunger Free Vermont](#), or call 2-1-1 for more information.

## New at healthvermont.gov

Outbreaks associated with social gatherings and events in October led to increases in cases throughout the state, and ultimately impacted our most vulnerable settings. Learn more in the latest [Weekly Data Summary Spotlight](#).

[The new map](#) of town-level COVID-19 activity shows the **rate of cases of COVID-19** among Vermont residents per 10,000 people, by town of residence during the past two weeks. This change offers a more current view of what’s happening, on a rolling basis. The map also includes a table that shows cumulative town counts since March. The map and the table are updated weekly.

## Case Information

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont

As of 12 p.m. on December 8, 2020

Description	Number
New cases*	100 (5,180 total)

Currently hospitalized	28
Hospitalized in ICU	4
Hospitalized under investigation	4
Percent Positive (7-day average)	2.7%
People tested	235,474
Total tests	588,633
Total people recovered	3,076
Deaths+	85
Travelers monitored	174
Contacts monitored	157
People completed monitoring	11,289

\* Includes testing conducted at the Health Department Laboratory, commercial labs and other public health labs.

+ Death occurring in persons known to have COVID-19. Death certificate may be pending.

Hospitalization data is provided by the Vermont Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Coalition and is based on hospitals updating this information.

Find more data at: [healthvermont.gov/currentactivity](https://healthvermont.gov/currentactivity).

### Guidance for Vermonters and Businesses

- Health information, guidance and data: [healthvermont.gov/covid19](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19)
- Sector guidance: [accd.vermont.gov/covid-19](https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19)
- Modeling: [dfr.vermont.gov/about-us/covid-19/modeling](https://dfr.vermont.gov/about-us/covid-19/modeling)
- Governor's actions: [governor.vermont.gov/covid19response](https://governor.vermont.gov/covid19response)

Get the information you need at our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### School & Child Care Guidance

- **Strong and Healthy Start:** [Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools](#)
- **Mental Health:** [A Strong and Healthy Start: Social, Emotional and Mental Health Supports During COVID-19](#)
- **Child care:** [Health Guidance for Child Care and Out of School Care](#)

More resources on the [Your Community web page](#).

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**Media Contact:** [CV19media@vermont.gov](mailto:CV19media@vermont.gov)

Information for the public can be found at <https://healthvermont.gov/covid19>.