



## Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) December 15, 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)

### **COVID-19 Vaccination in Vermont Begins**

An Emergency Department nurse at the University of Vermont Medical Center on Tuesday became the first Vermonter to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and the state received its second shipment of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, officials said.

“We now have a safe and effective vaccine — developed in an unprecedented amount of time — and it’s here, in Vermont,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “This is a truly pivotal moment in the pandemic — one that should give us hope for the future. But at the same time, we must remember this is just the start of a long process to receive and administer enough vaccine to bring COVID-19 under control.”

The Health Department has been allocated weekly shipments of 5,850 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine through December. We also expect to receive an equal number of the second dose in the coming weeks, Dr. Levine said.

The state has also placed a pre-order for the Moderna vaccine, pending its approval by the FDA. Should it receive authorization, Vermont could potentially see 11,400 doses next week and 5,000 doses at the end of the month. This would bring the total amount of vaccine in the state to almost 34,000 doses, he said.

The Health Department, along with the State Emergency Operations Center, is in the process of distributing vaccine to hospitals throughout the state. This will be done in coordination with the hospitals’ clinic schedule and the 120-hour window to use the vaccine.

“What’s important to know now is that, while supply is limited, vaccines will go to certain priority groups — the first being high-risk health care workers and residents of long-term care

facilities,” Dr. Levine said. “They will be notified directly about when and where they can get vaccinated.”

We anticipate finalizing the next priority group in the coming weeks following recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and our own Vermont Advisory Group, Dr. Levine said. Both of these groups will be advising best practices when identifying these groups, and how they will know when their turn has arrived. They will almost certainly involve some combination of people over 65, people under 65 with chronic or immune compromising conditions, and frontline workers, he said.

“For most Vermonters, it will likely be several months before the vaccine is widely available. But when it is available to you, you will know, through our own communications and through our partners — the health care providers, pharmacies, and others who will provide the vaccine across the state,” Dr. Levine said.

In the meantime, we must keep up our prevention practices, including physical distancing, mask-wearing and handwashing, in addition to limiting travel and avoiding gatherings, he added.

Regularly updated information about the vaccine is at [healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine)

### **Find Opportunities to Support the COVID-19 Response**

Vermonters can now step up and help with the COVID-19 response in long-term care facilities and other areas. Clinicians with additional capacity are especially needed – in either paid or volunteer roles. But anyone – including part-time workers, retirees, unemployed individuals, college students – can help fill short-term gaps in the system caused by COVID-19 outbreaks. Visit [www.vermont.gov/covid-staffing](https://www.vermont.gov/covid-staffing) for more information.

### **Stay Informed with VT-ALERT**

Stay up to date on the latest COVID guidance and information by registering for Vermont Alert (VT-ALERT), the State’s emergency notification system. Visit [www.vtalert.gov](https://www.vtalert.gov) and select the alerts they would like to receive (COVID information is listed under “Health Alerts”). Current subscribers can also update their notifications. Notifications are available via email, text, phone and the Everbridge mobile app.

### **New at healthvermont.gov**

Nearly 60% of Vermonters with COVID-19 have a pre-existing health condition or are at least 60 years old. These two populations are at the highest risk for serious COVID-19-related outcomes. Learn more in the latest [Weekly Data Summary Spotlight](#).

### **Case Information**

**Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont**  
As of 12 p.m. on December 15, 2020

Description	Number
New cases*	66 (5,923 total)
Currently hospitalized	20
Hospitalized in ICU	4
Hospitalized under investigation	0
Percent Positive (7-day average)	2.1%
People tested	245,457
Total tests	625,217
Total people recovered	3,680
Deaths+	100
Travelers monitored	206
Contacts monitored	194
People completed monitoring	11,381

\* 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](#).

### 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](https://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](#).

### **Food resources**

If your financial situation has recently changed, you may now qualify for Vermont nutrition and food programs, including 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. Contact the [Health Department](#), [Hunger Free Vermont](#), or call 2-1-1 for more information.

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