



## Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) December 29, 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)

### **State officials provide vaccination update, preview next steps**

Human Services Secretary Mike Smith said Tuesday that about 9,800 Vermonters have been vaccinated so far, including 8,000 health care workers, 900 emergency services personnel and 900 in long-term care facilities, though that number is likely larger due to a lag in reporting through the federal government.

By the end of January, everyone in Phase 1A should have received at least the first dose of the vaccine, with many having received second doses, he said.

Sec. Smith also previewed the next phase of vaccinations, which will be prioritized and given based on age. For example, those age 75 and older will be the first to get the vaccine after Phase 1A is complete, then 70 and over, then 65 and older.

People with underlying health conditions will also be a priority — no matter what age — and those conditions will be well defined, he said. Officials are also working on how those who face health inequities will fall into these priority groupings.

“What we are trying to do is to design a system that is easily implemented, easily understood, and prioritizes our fundamental goal — protecting lives,” Sec. Smith said.

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD showed data about COVID-19 deaths in Vermont, which have been almost exclusively among those age 60 and older. He also noted that 40% of people with COVID-19 have a pre-existing chronic condition, some having two or more such conditions.

“Our guiding ‘North Star’ in this endeavor is to prevent the most deaths,” Dr. Levine said. “The complex work of prioritization is essential in these early stages. It must be done with

careful consideration to ensure there is equitable and systematic access as the amount of vaccine coming to Vermont increases. With each shot, we are that much closer to reducing the risk of exposure to where we can begin a return to a state closer to normalcy.”

### **Temporary change allows for gathering with single, trusted household through New Years**

Dr. Levine said on Tuesday that while it is too early to know if we will see any increase or not in cases following the holidays, the data projections look favorable. The more people who followed the guidance for travel and limited gatherings, the better the odds we will not see a spike – and the same goes for the upcoming New Year’s celebrations.

Both Governor Scott and Dr. Levine appealed to Vermonters to stick close to state guidance, as we usher in the brighter days of 2021:

- For the period from December 23 – January 2, one household may gather with one other trusted household. That is a maximum of two households getting together during this period.
- Staying home and with people you live with is still the lowest risk. Gathering with people you do not live with is not recommended for people who are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 or for the people who care for them.
- If you do get together with another household, the Health Department strongly encourages getting tested 7 days afterwards. Find a site near you at [healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing](https://healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing).
- If you gather with anyone from out of state, everyone in both households must quarantine for 14 days, or 7 days with a negative test.
- The travel policy has not changed. If you [travel outside of Vermont, you must follow quarantine requirements](#).

[Read the press release.](#)

### **COVID-19 Response Holiday Schedule**

Many Health Department teams are working through the holiday week, including the laboratory staff, contact tracing and other critical response teams. We appreciate their dedication. However, there will be some changes to the schedule of updates:

There will be no update to the [Vermont Dashboard](#) on Jan. 1. Updates will resume the following day.

The following reports will be published on Dec. 31 (instead of Jan. 1):

- [Map of Cases by Town](#)
- [COVID-19 Cases in Vermont K-12 Learning Communities While Infectious](#)
- [Active Outbreaks in Long-term Care Facilities](#)

The [Weekly Data Summary](#) will not be published Jan. 1. It will next be published on Jan. 8.

There will be no [Daily Update](#) on Jan. 1.

## Case Information

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont  
As of 12 p.m. on December 29, 2020

Description	Number
New cases*	82 (7,202 total)
Currently hospitalized	31
Hospitalized in ICU	6
Hospitalized under investigation	3
Percent Positive (7-day average)	2%
People tested	261,095
Total tests	687,387
Total people recovered	4,804
Deaths+	130
Travelers monitored	249
Contacts monitored	166
People completed monitoring	11,766

\* 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](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](#).

### **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) and 3SquaresVT/SNAP. Contact the [Health Department](#), [Hunger Free Vermont](#), or call 2-1-1 for more information.

### **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. Visit [www.vermont.gov/covid-staffing](http://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 visiting [www.vtalert.gov](http://www.vtalert.gov) and registering or updating your account. Select the alerts you would like to receive (COVID information is listed under “Health Alerts”). Notifications are available via email, text, phone and the Everbridge mobile app.

# # #

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

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