



Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) April 15, 2020

New information is in red

Find this update on healthvermont.gov/covid19 by clicking the “See the Latest Update” button.

Please visit and share the Vermont Department of Health’s new COVID-19 web pages, including the new data dashboard for an in-depth picture of COVID-19 activity in Vermont at healthvermont.gov/covid19. Visitors can access the dashboard by clicking on the map of Vermont.

At a press conference Wednesday, Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD said Vermont may be seeing a trend toward cases beginning to plateau. He emphasized, however, that as we look to the future, we will still need to act to prevent spread of the virus and to protect Vermonters from getting infected. As we consider, in the Governor’s words, loosening the spigot, and easing restrictions, it may not mean an end to social distancing or limitations on large gatherings. Vermonters should not expect a quick end to the need for facial coverings or reducing our focus on respiratory hygiene. This is a long game, and individual efforts to prevent the spread of germs are essential, as is our continued testing and contact tracing efforts to contain outbreaks.

Serologic (antibody) testing

Serologic testing measures antibodies in the blood of a person who has been infected with COVID-19, whether they felt sick or not. In other words, it measures the body’s immune response to the virus, but does not detect the virus itself.

As the number of people who are infected with COVID-19 begins to level off or go down, it will be important to identify who is immune. This also helps us to know how many people contracted the COVID-19 virus, who might still be at risk of getting it, how to determine who should get the vaccine first when it’s available, and who could return to work.

At this stage in the pandemic, the priority is to know who is currently infected with COVID-19. But serologic testing is a critical part of Vermont’s strategy. The Vermont Department of Health has convened a working group of experts to research antibody tests. Based on those findings, we will decide how to best include this type of test in Vermont.

New on healthvermont.gov

Our COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions have been expanded, organized and redesigned in a user-friendly format that is easily searchable. Visit healthvermont.gov/covid19-faq and click the “See all frequently asked questions” button.

You can also find new guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19 for managers and owners of [apartment complexes](#) and [senior living communities](#) at healthvermont.gov/covid19-groupliving.

Cloth Face Coverings

Facial coverings are encouraged for essential workers in stores and their customers. The Health Department released new [Health & Safety Tips for Essential Businesses](#), which, in addition to wearing cloth face coverings, includes tips like sanitizing high-touch areas, installing plastic shields, limiting the number of customers in a store, and more.

The Health Department recommends that all Vermonters wear cloth face coverings when outside of the home, since COVID-19 can spread before a person has any symptoms. Learn more in this [fact sheet](#). [Watch a video](#) of the U.S. Surgeon General on how to make your own face covering using items around the house.

Expedited Temporary Licenses for Health Professionals

[Health professionals can quickly become temporarily licensed](#) to provide care during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Vermont’s Response

Governor Phil Scott [extended Vermont’s State of Emergency through May 15](#). All measures, including the Stay Home, Stay Safe order are now in effect until midnight on May 15 (note: schools remain dismissed for in-person instruction through the end of the school year). [Read the press release](#).

Travel & Lodging

Residents and non-residents coming to Vermont from outside the state – for anything other than an essential purpose – should [quarantine at home](#) for 14 days. Travel to Vermont by anyone from a COVID-19 “hot spot” is strongly discouraged at this time.

All lodging facilities are currently to be closed except for exemptions when supporting the state’s COVID-19 response. Governor Scott announced on April 10 that lodging operators may accept reservations for stays and events occurring on June 15 or later.

Volunteering

We still need your help! Please sign up to support the state’s COVID-19 response: <https://vermont.gov/volunteer>. Anyone with medical and healthcare skills is directed to the Medical Reserve Corps, and those with other needed skills to a quick registration process to sign up to help.

Have medical supplies to donate? Visit the [COVID-19 Donations site](#).

Case Information

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont

As of 11:00 a.m. on April 15, 2020

Total cases*	759
Currently hospitalized	33
Hospitalized under investigation	30
Deaths+	30
Total tests	11,081
People being monitored	32
People completed monitoring	800

*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 as they are able.

Find more information on new data dashboard at healthvermont.gov/covid19 by clicking on the map of Vermont.

Guidance for Vermonters

Who to contact:

- **If you have questions:** Use the [Ask A Question tool](#) on healthvermont.gov and review the FAQs.
- **Call the Health Department at 802-863-7240.** We're ready to respond to COVID-19 health-related questions. Calls are answered 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., seven days a week. Outside those hours, leave a message and your call will be returned. Find answers – whether you are a health care provider looking for lab results, a returning traveler, calling from a long-term care facility or work in child care services affected by COVID - 19.
- **For non-health related questions, dial 2-1-1.** If you have trouble reaching 2-1-1, dial 1-866-652-4636.
- **If you are sick:** Stay home and contact your health care provider online or by phone. Do not go to the hospital, except in a life-threatening situation.

Testing

The Department of Health continues to test Vermonters with COVID-19 symptoms to help increase contact tracing efforts and prevent the virus from spreading. Vermonters can be tested at hospital locations statewide and health centers in Island Pond, South Hero and Wells River. Additional sites will be opened as the needs are determined.

IMPORTANT: Everyone must have a referral from their provider in order to be tested.

- CALL your health care provider to be evaluated so the provider can determine if you need a test.
- DO NOT go to a testing site without an order from your provider.
- Patients who are NOT experiencing symptoms will not be tested.

Health care providers are encouraged to order a test for patients with symptoms, and can visit healthvermont.gov/covid19-providers for more information.

Enjoy the Outdoors Safely

Spring in Vermont is great – so take the proper precautions and go outside. Just be sure to stay close to home, practice social distancing, choose low-risk activities, respect all signs for closed areas and check regularly for ticks. For more info visit:

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/outdoor-recreation-and-covid-19> and healthvermont.gov/BeTickSmart

If you are or someone you know is in crisis

Feeling anxious, confused, overwhelmed or powerless is common during an infectious disease outbreak.

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

- Call your [local mental health crisis line](#)
- Call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255
- Text VT to 741741 to talk with someone at the [Crisis Text Line](#).
- For more information visit healthvermont.gov/suicide.

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