



Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) April 17, 2020

New information is in red

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

Please visit the Vermont Department of Health’s updated COVID-19 web pages — including the new data dashboard: healthvermont.gov/covid19.

The path to restart Vermont

Governor Phil Scott today outlined an approach for the phased restart of Vermont’s economy, emphasizing the state’s modeling indicates initial steps can be taken while the [Stay Home, Stay Safe order](#) remains in effect. The new [addendum](#) to his executive order:

- Allows small crews for outside construction or other outdoor trade jobs, and single-worker low- or no-contact professional services
- Clarifies guidance for retailers to allow additional operations using delivery and curbside service
- Outlines safety requirements for these entities and others already operating to ensure continued social distancing, hygiene and disinfection

The state’s latest modeling, presented today, shows the growth rate in new COVID-19 cases has averaged below 4% for the last 12 days, the rate at which cases double has slowed dramatically, and the number of people requiring hospitalizations remains stable.

But we must stay vigilant – meaning staying home, avoiding large gatherings, staying six feet away from others, using a cloth face covering when in public, and washing our hands – to keep up this trend. [Read the press release](#). Read ACCD’s Guidance: accd.vermont.gov

Serologic (antibody) testing

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD reported on Friday the findings of a working group of Vermont experts researching antibody tests. At this time, the group found the tests that are currently available are not accurate or reliable enough to make decisions or recommendations to change individual or population-level behaviors. The group will continue reviewing the information periodically to see if there are improvements.

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.

New on healthvermont.gov

Race and ethnicity data

The Health Department is now including data about race and ethnicity on its data dashboard at healthvermont.gov/covid19 (click on the map of Vermont). We recognized the need to include this information to help us understand how Vermonters were being affected by COVID-19, but in our earlier efforts to respond to the pandemic, race and ethnicity data was not always collected for each patient.

Health equity exists when all people have a fair and just opportunity to be healthy – especially those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage, historical injustice, and other systemic inequalities. Therefore, our epidemiology team collaborated with Vermont Information Technology Leaders (VITL) to cross-reference medical records to gain more robust race information about COVID-19 cases in Vermont. At the end of March, race was unknown in 73% of cases, but through our joint work, we have brought that number down to just 8%. We have been able to partner with VITL through a state directive issued in response to the State of Emergency.

We can use this data to help to prevent the spread of illness, improve care for patients, and present a more complete picture of how COVID-19 may be affecting everyone in Vermont.

The Vermont State Health Assessment reports on what we know about the health status of Vermonters. Updated every five years, most recently in 2018, the assessment provides vital data for examining health inequities by race and ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and geography. See the report and learn more at healthvermont.gov/sha.

How Are You Staying Safe and Happy at Home?

We know it can be tough staying home. But there are still lots of ways we can keep living happy, healthy lives. [Watch and share our new video](#) to see a few of our fellow Vermonters doing just that. We're all in this together!

Cloth Face Coverings

The 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](#). **NEW: Find a list of [where to buy cloth face coverings](#).**

Facial coverings are encouraged for essential workers in stores and their customers. Read our [Health & Safety Tips for Essential Businesses](#).

Expedited Temporary Licenses for Health Professionals

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

Volunteering

We still need your help! Please sign up to support the state's COVID-19 response: <https://vermont.gov/volunteer>. 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 17, 2020

Total cases*	779
Currently hospitalized	32
Hospitalized under investigation	24
Deaths+	35
Total tests	12,116
People being monitored	29
People completed monitoring	804

*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 and respect all signs for closed areas. For more info visit: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/outdoor-recreation-and-covid-19>

Ticks are Terrible at Social Distancing

As you go safely outdoors, remember that the ticks are starting to come back and are hungry for their spring meal. It's up to us to stay away from them. Use insect repellent, avoid wooded and brushy areas, and always do a tick check when you get home. Get more tick tips at 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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