



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

New information is in red and bold.

This update is available online at 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

Investigation of positive antigen test results in Manchester

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD provided an update at Friday’s press conference on reports of 59 positive COVID-19 antigen tests from Manchester Medical Center.

So far, 17 of the 59 people have since had a PCR test, which is recommended to confirm the positive antigen result.

Of the 17 people, 15 were negative and 2 were positive.

Although our investigation is not complete, it appears that many of the positive antigen results reported by Manchester Medical Center may have been false positives, Dr. Levine said.

There are a number of reasons why this can happen, but it may be due to the use of antigen tests for people without symptoms. Many of the 59 people who tested positive with the antigen test did not have symptoms.

The antigen test is recommended by the CDC and the [Association of Public Health Laboratories](#) to be used for people WITH symptoms,. We don’t have evidence about the accuracy of the antigen test on people without symptoms.

Dr. Levine also shared details about the testing offered at popup sites in the communities of Manchester and Londonderry.

So far, our lab has reported that all 405 of the specimens analyzed were negative.

“This is good indication that these cases are not spreading within the community,” he said.

Health officials continue to investigate the situation, and treat all positive antigen tests the same as any positive case – reaching out to each person, giving them guidance to isolate, tracing their contacts, and recommending they get a confirmatory PCR test.

“We are learning more about antigen tests, and they are a useful tool for screening patients who do have symptoms,” Dr. Levine said. “But our recent PCR results are showing us why they need to be confirmed, so we have a more accurate picture of current infection in patients.”

If you are concerned that you may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, please contact your health care provider to see if you should be tested.

All Vermonters should continue following the same simple actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Wear a face mask when around others if you are able
- Keep 6 feet apart
- Wash your hands frequently
- Stay home when you’re sick

Health officials say science shows Vermont schools can open safely in the fall

Officials on Friday outlined the careful public health considerations that have gone into [guidance to reopen schools](#) this fall.

Dr. Levine emphasized that we know much more about the virus now than we did in March, can track data in real time, and respond to cases quickly with our contact tracing teams.

“Vermont’s guidance is clearly and emphatically focused on safety of teachers, students and staff,” he said, while also taking into account the negative impact on children of not reopening schools.

Governor Phil Scott noted that kids need structure, relationships with their peers, their teachers, and other adults for their academic, social, and emotional development.

“We know there are already equity gaps based on differences in kids’ needs, their home environments, and countless other variables, and these are exacerbated when educating only through remote learning,” Gov. Scott said.

The Governor made clear abundant safety precautions and restrictions – developed with public health and infectious disease professionals – will be in place to protect students, teachers and staff, and that all decisions will continue to be guided by the latest public health data and science.

State Epidemiologist Patsy Kelso acknowledged that we are seeing more cases of COVID-19 in children nationwide and in Vermont, but this is not surprising as states have reopened, and more testing has become available. Children still make up a minority of cases.

Vermont’s guidance focuses on keeping COVID-19 out of schools with daily screenings, but we recognize there may be cases. That’s why additional measures are meant to keep it from spreading, through physical distancing, masks and contact tracing.

“We’ve know our own data, have studied data from other countries, and now have experience from child care facilities being open in Vermont.”

“Vermont stands with the science... and we continue to do so,” Kelso said.

New on healthvermont.gov

This week’s [Weekly Summary of Vermont COVID-19 Data](#) has been posted, with a spotlight on county profiles. You can also find all the past weekly summaries at the same link.

A new map has been added to the [Data Dashboard](#). “Percent of Population Tested by County,” shows the percent of residents by county that have been tested.

Data note: The number of people tested displayed in the dashboard dropped by less than 300 people on July 16. This is due to a new method being used that improves the quality of the demographic information about people tested and removes duplicates. The change also affects the numbers in the “Total People Tested” graph and “People Tested by Day” graph.

Case Information

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont

As of 12 p.m. on July 17, 2020

Description	Number
Total cases*	1,334 (9 new)
Currently hospitalized	4
Hospitalized under investigation	29
Total people recovered	1,121
Deaths+	56
People tested	79,366
Travelers monitored	1,338
Contacts monitored	105
People completed monitoring	3,757

* 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 at the data dashboard: healthvermont.gov/currentactivity.

Get Tested for COVID-19

People who want to be tested can contact their health care provider for a referral.

For people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, pop-up sites for testing are currently scheduled through July. The sites operate from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

[See how to get tested and to make an appointment.](#)

Protest Safely

We support Vermonters engaging in peaceful protests and other civic activities to make their voices heard. Large gatherings pose a greater risk for virus exposure. So, wear a mask when near others, maintain a 6-foot distance, and if you're sick, find actions to make yourself heard from home. We encourage anyone who is participating in a public action to get tested for COVID-19. [Learn more about how to get tested.](#)

Guidance for Vermonters

- If you are having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to the hospital.
- If you are having even mild [symptoms of COVID-19](#), call your health care provider.
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet and [wear a mask when near others](#).
- Visit our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Traveler Information

Get the latest info about [travel to Vermont](#), including about quarantine requirements, testing, and to [sign up with Sara Alert for symptom check reminders](#).

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](#)
- 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.
- See ways for [Coping with Stress](#).

For more information:

- COVID-19 health information, guidance and case data: healthvermont.gov/covid19.
- Governor's actions: governor.vermont.gov/covid19response.
- The state's modeling: dfr.vermont.gov/about-us/covid-19/modeling.

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Media Contact:

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