

Vermont Department of Health

Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 31, 2020

New information is in red

This update is also available at healthvermont.gov/covid19 under UPDATES

Vermonters are being asked to stay home as much as possible to keep everyone safe during this pandemic. Please leave for essentials only, such as food, and keep a safe distance of 6 feet between yourself and others. This will help slow the spread of the virus and protect people who are more vulnerable.

Though we may all feel isolated at this time, we can, and should, connect with each other through technology, reading books, playing games and finding hobbies we enjoy. We're all in this together.

The Department of Health wants Vermonters to know:

- Visit healthvermont.gov/covid19 for the most up-to-date information and guidance (see new additions below).
- All travelers coming to Vermont from out-of-state now must home-quarantine for 14 days (see details below).
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath): CALL your health care provider. Many people who are mildly ill can manage their symptoms at home with rest, drinking fluids and taking fever-reducing medicine, when needed.
- Testing is currently limited and is prioritized to healthcare workers, hospitalized patients, and vulnerable populations, however, the Health Department has expanded testing of people with mild to moderate symptoms (see details below).
- Not everybody needs to be tested. Do not call the Health Department. Do not go to the hospital, except in a life-threatening situation.
- If you need to go food shopping, to the pharmacy or do other essential activities, keep a distance of 6 feet between yourself and others. Six feet is about the length of a 3-person couch or a bed.
- It's OK to get fresh air, exercise outside and walk your dog – as long as you keep 6 feet away from other people.

Vermont's Response

Travel Restrictions

At a press conference Monday, March 30, Governor Phil Scott announced new restrictions on travelers arriving in Vermont. Residents and non-residents coming to Vermont from outside the state – for anything other than an essential purpose – should home-quarantine

for 14 days. Travel to Vermont by anyone from a COVID-19 “hot spot” is strongly discouraged at this time. [Read the order](#) and the [press release](#).

Travelers should follow the [CDC's Domestic Travel Advisory for New York, New Jersey and Connecticut](#), which advised residents of those states to refrain from non-essential domestic travel for 14 days.

Lodging Operations

The Governor’s order also clarifies that all lodging operations are to be suspended. Lodging facilities – which includes hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, inns, short term rentals (e.g. VRBO, HomeAway, Airbnb, etc.), and all public and private camping facilities and RV parks – are to be closed except for stated exemptions when supporting the state’s COVID-19 response.

Online lodging reservations are also suspended. The Vermont State Police and local law enforcement will monitor lodging providers for compliance and work with the Attorney General’s Office on additional compliance measures if needed.

Testing

As part of plans to expand testing, the Health Department on Saturday announced a new COVID-19 testing site at Landmark College in Putney, operated by the Vermont National Guard. This is the latest of sites opened to provide Vermonters with as broad access to testing as possible. [Read the press release](#).

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, emphasized at the Governor’s Monday press conference that Vermonters cannot show up at the new site – or any testing site – to get tested:

- You must CALL your health care provider to be evaluated and for the provider to determine if you need a test.
- DO NOT go to a testing site without an order from your provider.
- Tests will still be prioritized, and patients who are NOT experiencing symptoms will not be tested.

Dr. Levine added that expanded testing means we will have more results to report – including in the number of new cases. So, a potential jump in those numbers should be expected. Increased testing will allow for more people to know the care they need and what precautions to take, and for greater understanding of the scope of the disease’s spread in Vermont.

On March 26, Governor Phil Scott [directed schools to remain dismissed](#) through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Districts will close schools for in-person instruction and be required to implement continuity of learning plans for remote learning. This extends the Governor’s previous directive dismissing PreK-12 schools from March 18 to April 6. [Read the press release](#).

On March 24, Gov. Scott issued a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order and directed the closure of in-person operations for all non-essential businesses. These restrictive measures are in place to minimize all unnecessary activities outside the home to slow the spread of this virus and protect the public.

Effective March 25, 2020 at 5 p.m., all businesses and not-for-profit entities not expressly exempted in the order were directed to suspend all in-person business operations. Business that can be conducted online or by phone, or sales that can use curbside pickup or delivery only, can continue. [Read more about what the order means to Vermonters](#). [Read more about what this means for businesses.](#)

The order follows Gov. Scott's declaration of a state of emergency in March, and a series of community mitigation actions throughout the month. Child care centers are closed, except those providing care for workers who are essential to Vermont's ongoing effort in the current pandemic.

The Health Department has also taken the following actions:

- Cautioning Vermonters against using non-approved drugs to treat COVID-19. At this time, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved any drugs specifically for the treatment of patients with COVID-19. [Read the press release](#).
- Warning Vermonters that the new coronavirus attacks the lungs, making it harder for people who smoke or vape – tobacco, cannabis or anything else – to fight off the virus, putting them at much greater risk of severe illness, even death. There has never been a better time, and there has never been a better reason, to quit – and [802quits.org](#) can help with online or phone quit coaching, quit resources and tools.
- The Vermont Department of Health has also launched [VTHelplink](#), a new, single source clearinghouse for Vermonters to receive free, confidential and personalized information and referrals to substance use prevention, treatment and recovery services throughout the state. [Read the press release](#).

Case Information

New: Limited hospitalization data is now being provided below and at [healthvermont.gov/covid19](#).

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont As of 1:00 p.m. on March 31, 2020

Positive test results*	293
Total tests conducted	4,250
Deaths+	13
People being monitored	237
People who have completed monitoring	556

*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 Rates

Hospitalized patients with COVID-19	21
Hospitalized patients under investigation for COVID-19	52

Hospitalization data is provided by the Vermont Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Coalition and is based on hospitals updating this information as they are able.

These tables, a map of case numbers by county, and a chart of case number totals are available on our [COVID-19 web page](#) under *COVID-19 Activity in Vermont*.

Guidance for Vermonters

When to call:

- **If you have questions:** Dial 2-1-1. If you have trouble reaching 2-1-1, dial 1-866-652-4636. You can also use the [Ask a Question](#) tool on [healthvermont.gov](#).
- **If you are sick or concerned about your health:** Call your health care provider by phone. Do not go to the hospital, except in a life-threatening situation.

Who can be tested?

If you are ill, call your health care provider. Testing is not treatment and not everyone needs to be tested. *Do not call 2-1-1 or the Health Department about testing.*

All specimens submitted by health care providers to the UVM Medical Center will be tested. However, testing resources in Vermont and in the U.S. are currently limited. Vermont testing will prioritize samples from health care workers who are symptomatic, patients who are hospitalized, long-term care facility residents, those who are incarcerated and other high-priority groups.

New to Healthvermont.gov

The Health Department website has several new features:

- A new section called “Ask a Question,” which allows visitors to type questions about COVID-19 in Vermont into a box. The information we currently have available will be provided as an answer through a web bot. We appreciate your patience as we continue to update this information regularly.
- A new COVID-19 web page to meet the specific needs of health care providers. It includes current guidance, health alerts, and resources for protecting patients and

health care workers in different settings. It can be found at healthvermont.gov/covid19-providers.

- Fact sheets with [COVID-19 information for health care workers](#), in addition to Vermonters who are [awaiting test results for COVID-19](#), [diagnosed with COVID-19](#), or [a close contact of someone with COVID-19](#).
- A new fact sheet is available explaining what the terms isolation, quarantine and self-observation mean for Vermonters.
- A new section called “Coping with COVID-19 Stress” gives Vermonters tips and resources on how to navigate these uncertain times.

Translated Materials

The Health Department has fact sheets translated into nine languages on its website [What You Need to Know About Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

You can also find links to translated videos created by the Spectrum Multicultural Youth Program, Howard Center and other Burlington community members.

Find these at healthvermont.gov/covid19 under “Translated Materials.”

Stay up to date at healthvermont.gov/covid19