

Vermont Department of Health

Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 27, 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:

- For the most up-to-date information and guidance visit healthvermont.gov/covid19 (see new additions 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 expects to expand testing of people with mild to moderate symptoms in the near future (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

At a [press conference](#) Friday (March 27), Governor Phil Scott and members of his administration provided an update on the [Governor's directive](#) to dismiss schools for in-person instruction for the remainder of 2019-2020 school year.

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.](#)

Also at the March 27 press conference, Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, announced plans to make it easier for Vermonters who have mild or moderate symptoms of COVID-19 to get tested. However, this would not change the testing process.

- You still need to CALL your health care provider to be evaluated and 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.
- Please give health care providers time to review new guidance from the Health Department around the new testing protocols.

Dr. Levine additionally emphasized 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. Our message in general, and all the more important now is that 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 today announced the launch of [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.](#)

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 on Thursday is cautioned 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.](#)

Case Information

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont

As of 1:00 p.m. on March 27, 2020

Positive test results*	184
Total tests conducted	2,261
Deaths+	10
People being monitored	331
People who have completed monitoring	376

*Includes testing conducted at the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory, commercial labs and other public health labs.

+Death occurring in persons known to have COVID-19. Death certificate may be pending.

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.
- **Travelers returning** from [high risk countries](#) or [from a cruise](#): Call Health Department Epidemiology at 802-863-7240.
- **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. 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](#).

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

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