

Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 23, 2020

New information is in red

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

Vermont is experiencing community spread of COVID-19. Everyone is strongly encouraged to engage in their activities while keeping a safe distance from others – and to stay home when possible. This is critical to helping slow the spread of the virus and protect our vulnerable populations.

The Department of Health wants Vermonters to know:

- For the most up-to-date information and guidance about COVID-19 visit healthvermont.gov/covid19.
- **If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms** (fever, cough, shortness of breath), **CALL** your health care provider.
- **Testing is currently limited** and is prioritized to healthcare workers, hospitalized patients, and vulnerable populations.
- **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.
- **Please connect with family, friends and your community in responsible ways** such as using technology, going outside, learning a new skill or helping others in need. We encourage social distancing, not social isolation!

Vermont's Response

Gov. Phil Scott declared a state of emergency to help ensure Vermont has all the necessary resources to respond to this evolving threat.

The strategies include:

- Restricting visitor access at long-term care facilities.
- Prohibiting non-essential gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Ordering the closure of all bars and restaurants statewide, effective 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 17 until April 6. Establishments can continue to offer takeout and delivery service.
- Making a Continuity of Education Plan for the orderly dismissal of all schools, and cancellation of all school related activities, which began March 18. It will last through April 6, but may be extended for a longer period.
- Directing childcare centers across the state to close normal operations but encouraging continued operation exclusively where needed to provide childcare services for workers who are essential to Vermont's ongoing effort in community mitigation of COVID-19. See March 18 guidance on [Supporting the Child Care Needs of Essential Persons During a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#).

- Governor Scott on Monday signed [an order](#) directing all businesses and not-for-profit entities - to the maximum extent possible - to put into place telecommuting or work-from-home procedures, no later than 8:00 p.m. on Monday, March 23. He also told Vermonters to prepare for a forthcoming announcement on further restrictions and a stay-at-home directive.
- Ordering “close contact” businesses, including gyms, fitness centers and similar exercise facilities, hair salons and barbers, nail salons, spas and tattoo parlors to close all in-person operations no later than 8 p.m. on Monday, March 23.

Case Information

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont

As of 1:00 p.m. on March 23, 2020

Positive test results	75
Deaths+	5
Total tests conducted*	1,173
People being monitored	336
People who have completed monitoring	316

+Three new deaths among previously reported positive cases. All three were residents of Burlington Health and Rehab.

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

Please note: Due to the increasing number of cases and investigations, detailed demographic information is no longer able to be compiled by our epidemiology and investigation teams in time to match the posting of case numbers. We are looking at periodic reporting of this detail.

Public health epidemiologists are working to investigate possible travel or exposure history and to identify anyone who had close contact with the patients. Those individuals will be assessed for their exposure risk and provided with guidance for their health. Where appropriate, they will receive recommendations for self-isolation or other restrictions.

We are in close contact with hospitals involved with any patients’ care to ensure patients and staff are properly cared for and protected.

We expect, and are prepared for, more cases in Vermont, and are taking every action to limit the spread of illness.

In addition to protecting a patient’s personal health information, state health and public safety officials are committed to ensuring that Vermonters are aware of any risk to themselves and their community. This is the essential work of public health. We will contact anyone identified as at-risk as part of any case investigation, and recommend they stay home for 14 days or follow other restrictions as needed.

Case Investigations and Response

The Health Department is prioritizing contact tracing and response efforts to cases of those who are hospitalized, residents of long-term care facilities, people who are incarcerated, and those who are immunocompromised.

This means the Health Department will work to identify people who are at high risk because they were in close contact with the individual, their household and other close contacts, health care workers and first responders who may have been exposed. They will be assessed for their exposure risk and provided with guidance for their health and recommendations for self-isolation or other measures.

Who can be tested?

If you are ill, call your health care provider to find out if you can be seen for evaluation. Testing is not treatment and not everyone needs to be tested. Do not call 2-1-1 or the Health Department about testing.

The Health Department continues to accept all specimens submitted by health care providers for testing. However, testing resources in Vermont and in the U.S. are currently limited. For the immediate term, 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. All other specimens submitted to the department will be tested as quickly as resources allow.

Guidance for Vermonters

When to call: If you have questions about COVID-19: Dial 2-1-1. If you have trouble reaching 2-1-1, dial 1-866-652-4636.

If you are returning from **Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel**, Europe, United Kingdom, Ireland, China, Iran, South Korea, Malaysia, 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. Please avoid going to the hospital, except in a life-threatening situation.

The Health Department has fact sheets available on its website [What You Need to Know About Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) translated into nine languages. **You can also find links to translated videos with information on COVID-19 created by the Spectrum Multicultural Youth Program, Howard Center, and other Burlington community members.** You can find these at healthvermont.gov/covid19 under “Translated Materials.”

Stay up to date at healthvermont.gov/covid19

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