

February 12, 2021

## COVID-19 Vaccination Expands to Vermonters Age 70 and Older on February 16

Starting 8:15 a.m. on Tuesday, February 16, people in Vermont who are age 70 and older will be able to make their appointment to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Going online to [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) is the fastest way to make an appointment, and there are enough slots at sites throughout Vermont for everyone who is eligible. Once on the website, people are asked to create an account. Vermonters age 70 and older can then log in to make their appointment.

The Health Department reports that more than 33,500 people in the 75 and older age group have made appointments to be vaccinated. Approximately 19,000 Vermonters in that age group have received at least their first dose.

**Everyone can create an account now, but people who are newly eligible (age 70-74) must wait until Tuesday to make their appointment for vaccination. People 75 and older do not need to wait to make appointments.**

If you already have an account because you were tested for COVID-19 through a Health Department site, use the same account to make your vaccine appointment. Family members and friends are encouraged to assist their loved ones with the online system as needed.

Vaccination sites are available around the state, and people can choose a nearby location when making their appointment. In addition, Walgreens has now joined Kinney Drugs as a participating pharmacy and is administering vaccine in 20 locations. To make an appointment at Walgreens, visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) or go directly to their website at [walgreens.com](https://walgreens.com).

Anyone who is unable to make their appointment online, or who needs to speak with someone in a language other than English, can call 855-722-7878. The call center is open Monday to Friday 8:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Please do not call to make an appointment until February 16.**

[Read the press release](#)



## Prepare for your vaccine by creating an online account

Good news! Even if your age group is not yet eligible to be vaccinated, you can still get a head start on the process now by creating your account in our system. That way, it'll be smooth sailing when it's your turn to make an appointment for your first dose.

See our [tips and tricks](#) for creating a new account and making an appointment.

If you already have an account because you were tested for COVID-19 through a Health Department site, use the same account when it is time to make your vaccine appointment.

[Get started at HealthVermont.gov](#)

## Vermont will follow new CDC guidance for vaccinated people exposed to someone with COVID-19

Health Commissioner Mark Levine said at Friday's press conference that Vermont will follow CDC's new guidance for people who have been fully vaccinated and are exposed to someone with COVID-19.

The CDC says these people do not need to quarantine, as long as they:

- Are fully vaccinated (had two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and two weeks have passed)
- Are within 3 months of receiving the second dose of the vaccine
- Have not had any COVID-19 symptoms since the exposure

"This means that if you fit these criteria – meaning first and foremost that you have been vaccinated – and you come into contact with a COVID-positive person, you no longer need to quarantine," Dr. Levine said. "There is an exception, however, for vaccinated inpatients and residents in healthcare settings — they still need to quarantine."

"I can share today that Vermont will follow this new guidance about quarantine. This is great news, and shows we believe vaccination not only protects you from getting infected in those 90 days but also that you won't be able to spread the virus either," Dr. Levine said.

He emphasized, however, that we are not yet making any changes to travel-related quarantine for fully vaccinated people.

“We are being thoughtful about it and exploring its impact,” he said.

[Read the CDC's guidance](#)

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## Lab Results Indicate Likely Presence of COVID-19 Variant in the State

The City of Burlington’s testing of wastewater has detected the presence of two COVID-19 virus mutations that are associated with the B.1.1.7 variant, first detected in the United Kingdom. Detection of these two mutations is a strong indicator that the B.1.1.7 variant is present in the community.

Wastewater sampling is a pooled sample of many different community members, and only looks for the presence of two specific mutations, so this should not be considered definitive finding of that variant, but it does indicate the variant is most likely present in Vermont. The Health Department will work to confirm the presence of the variant through genetic sequencing of individual samples from COVID-19 positive individuals.

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time. Many emerge and disappear, but others can persist and even become the predominant strain. Some experts anticipate the more easily transmissible B.1.1.7 variant will become widespread throughout the country. According to the CDC, studies so far show the current vaccines are largely effective against this variant. Nonetheless, health experts warn the faster spreading variants can lead to more cases of COVID-19, as well as increased hospitalizations and deaths.

[Read the press release](#)

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## Help curb spread of COVID-19 by getting tested

Getting tested for COVID-19 is a critical tool to slowing the spread of the virus. The sooner you know if you have the virus, the sooner you can protect yourself, your loved ones and your community. Testing has never been easier with 15+ regular testing locations throughout the state, many open daily, using [quick and painless short nose swabs](#).

At Tuesday's press conference Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, noted the higher number of cases in Bennington, Rutland and Franklin counties relative to the rest of Vermont.

**Additional testing available in Manchester, Vermont:**

Saturday, Feb. 13 and Feb. 20  
SVMC Northshire campus  
5957 Main Street – Route 7A, Manchester  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We encourage Vermonters in the area take advantage of these new test sites, along with existing ones, as we are seeing increased spread of the virus at this time, Dr. Levine said.

If you have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, please contact your health care provider so they can refer you for testing. If you don't have a provider, you can call 2-1-1.

[Find testing near you](#)

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## Vaccine clinics reach people impacted by health disparities

Dr. Levine said the state's efforts to vaccinate Vermonters in some communities where people speak languages other than English began last week with two clinics.

The clinics focus on households with members aged 75 and older — and their family members age 16 and older — who require linguistically and culturally appropriate services, he said. This includes working with cultural brokers, having interpreters on hand or easily accessible, and providing accurately translated materials.

"We understand that language barriers and other factors faced by immigrant and New American communities have led to outbreaks, disproportionate outcomes and a markedly greater risk of COVID-19," Dr. Levine said. "I'm proud that we've been able to take these steps quickly, to align with our data-driven approach to prioritize those most at risk of severe illness and save lives."

"We have learned from our experiences throughout the state's pandemic response that it makes good public health sense — logically and logistically — to allow household members facing language and access barriers to get information and services at the same time, rather than duplicate these services later on," Dr. Levine added.

"We still have much more to do to address the significant disparities in the rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death among communities of color. But we hope this coordinated vaccination effort is an important step in working with trusted community partner networks to reach some of the most historically underserved people in Vermont."

[See multilingual resources](#)

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## Additional Resources About Vaccination & More

- Find answers to your questions about the COVID-19 vaccine from the CDC: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html).
- Find information sheets, posters and toolkits, and translated materials on our [Resources web page](#).
- COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard: [healthvermont.gov/covid19-vaccine-data](http://healthvermont.gov/covid19-vaccine-data).
- Get Vermont-specific information in our [Frequently Asked Questions](#). New questions added this week include:
  - Do COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility?
  - What should I know about side effects?
  - How can I confirm my vaccine appointment?
  - I am fully vaccinated. Do I need to quarantine if I am a close contact of someone with COVID-19?
  - Is one type of mask better than another? Is wearing two masks better?

[See all the FAQs](#)

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## 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](#).
- Text VT to 741741 to talk with someone at the [Crisis Text Line](#).
- Call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255. For more info, visit [healthvermont.gov/suicide](https://healthvermont.gov/suicide).
- Get connected to Alcohol and Drug Support Services at [VT Helplink](#).
- Get self-help tips and connect to mental health services at [COVID Support VT](#).

[Read more on coping with stress](#)

## New on [healthvermont.gov](https://healthvermont.gov)

In Vermont, the highest number of COVID-19 deaths occurred in December, when 71 people died. Learn more about COVID-19 death data in Vermont in the latest [Weekly Data Summary Spotlight](#).

See our new report [COVID-19 in long-term care facilities](#) to learn more, including how the Health Department works with these facilities to prepare for and prevent COVID-19. This report will be updated every Tuesday [on our website](#).

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