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March 19, 2021

## Gov. Scott announces all Vermonters will be eligible for vaccine by April 19

Governor Phil Scott today announced the timeline for when all Vermonters age 16 and older will be eligible to make an appointment for COVID-19 vaccination.

The next age group will be people age 60 and older, who can make an appointment starting Thursday, March 25 at 8:15 a.m. See the remaining groups below:

When a new group of people is eligible, they can register online at [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) or by calling 855-722-7878. Vermonters are encouraged to create an account ahead of time so it will be easier to log in when it's time to make an appointment.

### REMAINING VACCINE ELIGIBILITY TIMELINE



The length of the entire process will vary, but Vermonters can expect it to take approximately two months from the time you register to the time you are considered fully vaccinated. This includes the anticipated time between registration and an appointment, the time of a first and last dose, and the two weeks needed after a last dose for it to be at maximum effectiveness. The goal is to have Vermonters fully vaccinated by July 1.

“Our age banding approach has allowed us to first protect those at greatest risk of hospitalization and death, which is our top priority, and our approach has been effective. In fact, while we have one of the oldest populations in the country, we have among the highest percentage of people age 65 and older vaccinated,” said Governor Scott. “We continue to believe age banding is the most effective and fastest way to reach all Vermonters who want a vaccine.”

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD said the long-awaited reality of people being able to get their vaccine is the light at the end of the tunnel. At the same time, he cautioned Vermonters that with variant strains of the highly transmissible virus being identified in Vermont, prevention and testing must still be a priority.

“To really find our way out of this pandemic, along with registering for vaccination as soon as your age band opens, we must all continue to follow the very simple, but critically important guidance of masks, distancing and cautious travel,” said Dr. Levine. “This is the

only way to stay ahead in the race. Through prevention, testing and vaccination, we can achieve a level of community immunity that will bring us out of this pandemic. We can cross the 'public health finish line' sooner, together."

**Learn more about getting the vaccine**

## Guidance change for bars and social clubs

Gov. Scott also announced updates to COVID-19 guidance for bars and social clubs, like American Legions and VFWs. These establishments are being moved under the state's restaurant guidance, which will allow them to reopen within that sector's current restrictions. These include operating at 50% capacity, requiring patrons be seated at tables with a maximum of 6 per table, 6 feet of distance between parties, masking and more. Municipalities will be able to place more restrictions on these establishments in their jurisdictions.

See Work Safe guidance from the [Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#).

**See Work Safe guidance**

## Additional COVID-19 variant detected in Vermont

The Vermont Department of Health has confirmed that genomic sequencing of COVID-19 specimens has now identified two of the [variants of concern](#) circulating in the U.S.

In addition to results earlier this month of the B.1.1.7 variant that originated in the U.K., recent lab results now show the B.1.429 strain, first identified in California, is also in Vermont. The B.1.1.7 variant has now been found in eight specimens, and the B.1.429 variant was detected in three specimens. The labs report the detections were found in samples from Chittenden and Franklin Counties, with one sample's county of origin pending.

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants and strains are to be expected. Many emerge and disappear, but others can persist and even become the predominant strain.

The Health Department has sent 98 select samples to the Massachusetts Public Health Laboratory, Molecular Diagnostics and Virology program for genetic sequencing. The department has also sent 60 samples to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The specimens are taken from people who had already tested positive for COVID-19.

Health officials said while it is not surprising that the variants continue to be detected, it reinforces concerns of increased cases, illness and outbreaks.

"These variants of the COVID-19 virus can move more easily from person to person," said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. "This is setting us up for a race of sorts between the presence of strains of a highly contagious virus, our rapidly progressing vaccination program, and the need for each of us to continue to focus on prevention and getting tested."

**Read the press release**

## If you have any symptoms, stay home and get tested for COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus is still circulating in our communities, and the only way to know if you have it is to get tested.

Remember that [symptoms](#) can sometimes be mild, such as a headache, cough, fatigue or a runny nose. So, if you have even just one of these symptoms, it's best to get tested. It's also important to avoid going to work, school or other places until you receive a negative result. COVID-19 is a highly transmissible virus, and this is how we can each protect our loved ones and our communities.

If you have symptoms, talk to your health care provider. They can refer you for testing.

Testing is also important even if you don't have symptoms, since you can still have COVID-19 and not feel sick.

If you don't have symptoms and want to get tested, there are [many test sites](#) now available around the state. It's free and easy! [Watch a video about what to expect.](#)

### Find testing sites

## Video answers questions about COVID-19 vaccine & pregnancy — in multiple languages

A new Health Department video, [Sara Asks](#), was inspired by community education sessions held with our partners to answer some commonly asked questions around the COVID-19 vaccine. This first video centers on pregnancy, breastfeeding, and fertility questions.

It is available in English, Arabic, Nepali, French and Swahili with more languages coming soon. The videos (and other resources) can be found on our [Multilingual Resources web page](#).

### Find multilingual resources

## Stay up to date on the latest gathering guidance and other Frequently Asked Questions

As the state carefully reopens, and more people get vaccinated, guidance is added and updated often. Stay up on the latest by regularly checking our [Frequently Asked Questions!](#)

For example, read [the current restrictions on social gatherings](#) for people fully vaccinated or unvaccinated, and what kinds of prevention steps to take based on your situation.

We appreciate your efforts to stay informed -- for your health and those around you.

## See all Frequently Asked Questions

# 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](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html).
- Find information sheets, posters and toolkits, as well as translated materials on our [Resources web page](#).
- Get Vermont-specific information in our [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Added this week:
  - I am an English language learner or a member of the immigrant/refugee community. Am I eligible to get the vaccine?
  - I identify as Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). Am I eligible to get the vaccine?
  - Why is asthma not included as an eligible high-risk health condition?

**Visit the Resources webpage**

# 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

About 20% of outbreak-associated cases are attributed to workplaces. On average, there are 5 or fewer cases associated with an outbreak in a workplace, and nearly all of the cases associated with workplace outbreaks were among staff only. Learn more about workplace outbreaks in the latest [Weekly Data Summary Spotlight](#).

As of 12:00pm on March 19, 2021:

- 166,093 Vermonters have received a least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 88,841 Vermonters have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.



See the latest vaccine data on the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

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Vermont Department of Health | 802-863-7240 | [HealthVermont.gov](https://HealthVermont.gov)  
[AHS.VDHPublicCommunication@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHPublicCommunication@vermont.gov)

