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April 2, 2021

Dr. Levine ‘very concerned’ about increased spread of COVID-19

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, said at Friday’s press conference that although he is optimistic for the future, “when it comes to the present, frankly, I am very concerned.”

“Vermont is no longer the one ‘green’ state in a map of red COVID cases across the U.S.,” he said. “We are just like all the other states in our region — a region that is currently doing even worse than some other parts of the country — with more disease circulating right now.”

Although we are all tired of the pandemic, he said: “It’s not too late. We can still stop this rise in cases if we act now.”

Especially for those who are celebrating Easter and the other holidays being observed, this weekend is the time to start.

“With this much virus around, ANY gathering is risky,” Dr. Levine said. “If you do gather with people you don’t live with, keep it outside if you can, wear masks, double mask if you want to, and keep at least a 6-foot distance. For example, consider an outdoor Easter egg hunt instead of all eating together.”

If you do travel and are not vaccinated (including children), make sure to quarantine afterward. And get tested — after travel or any possible exposure, or after a large gathering, or if you have any symptom of COVID-19.

State officials emphasized the need for people to strictly follow the [health guidance](#), especially as the highly contagious variants take hold in the state. “I know this is difficult. But again, we’ve been at it for over a year, we just need to hang tough for a few more weeks,” said Dr. Levine.

[Learn more on preventing COVID-19](#)

Vermonters Age 40 and Older Can Make Vaccine Appointments Starting Monday

Starting Monday, April 5 at 8:15 a.m., Vermonters age 40 and older will be able to make an appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Going online to 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.

Click on the "Make an appointment" button to use the Health Department registration system. If you prefer to make your COVID-19 vaccine appointment through a participating pharmacy, you can find links on the same page to Kinney Drugs, CVS and Walgreens.

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.

Vaccination sites are available around the state, and people can choose a nearby location when making their appointment.

The next groups' eligibility dates are:

- April 12: age 30+
- April 19: age 16+

Learn more

Vaccine Eligibility Update for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)

As of Thursday, April 1, ALL members of the Vermont BIPOC community 16 years of age and older – as well as their family members – are now eligible for vaccination.

BIPOC Vermonters can make an appointment online at healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine or by calling 855-722-7878. Registrants would state they identify as BIPOC. These Vermonters can also register through one of the community clinics developed with our partners around the state.

Dr. Levine said there is an almost two-fold increase in risk for hospitalization among the BIPOC population. He also spoke to how the pace of vaccination for BIPOC continues to lag significantly behind, with a rate of 20.2% of the population having received at least one dose of vaccine, as compared with a rate of 33.4% among non-Hispanic whites.

"This is in spite of our ongoing efforts to offer vaccination of multigenerational households within the current age banding strategy and to engage our community partners in setting up community-based clinics," he said. "Nonetheless, it is unacceptable that this disparity remains for this population placed at higher risk."

If you already have an account through the Health Department, and are newly eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine for a reason other than your age, you may need to answer a few new eligibility questions before making an appointment.

- Log into your account and click on the "Dependent/Spouse" tab (not the "add dependent/spouse button")
- Click on "UPDATE DETAILS" for the person who needs an appointment, check the consent box and update your information.

Register for a vaccine

Appointments Now Open for Caregivers of Children with High-Risk Conditions

Parents or primary caregivers who are caring for children with certain high-risk conditions can now make appointments for vaccination.

“These children would be on our high-risk disease list due to their immunocompromised medically complex condition, and prioritized, if they were only old enough to qualify for a vaccine,” Dr. Levine said. “We need to ensure these parents and caregivers remain healthy enough to care for their child, and that they not risk bringing the virus into the home.”

Parents and primary caregivers of children with certain high-risk health conditions who are too young to get vaccinated (15 years or younger) can make an appointment at healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine or by calling 855-722-7878.

If you already have an account through the Health Department, and are newly eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine for a reason other than your age, you may need to answer a few new eligibility questions before making an appointment.

- Log into your account and click on the "Dependent/Spouse" tab (not the "add dependent/spouse" button at the top)
- Click on "UPDATE DETAILS" for the person who needs an appointment, check the consent box and update your information.

Register for a vaccine

Vaccination and College Students

The Governor's Office clarified the state's vaccination policy for college students. College students who meet the [residency requirements](#), which includes out-of-state college students who intend to stay in Vermont this summer, can get vaccinated [once their age group is eligible](#).

In addition, on April 30, Vermont is planning to open vaccine registration to college students who are residents of another state and do not intend to stay in Vermont for the summer. Please note that this is tentative and based on factors including the amount of vaccine allocated to us by the federal government.

Read the Governor's Press Release

Share what getting vaccinated means to you for a chance to win \$500 and be in a new TV ad!

The COVID-19 vaccine means something different to each and every one of us. Something we all have in common? Vaccines mean getting back to life and the things we miss.

Help us show why getting vaccinated is important! Submit your original videos, photos or written thoughts on what being vaccinated means to you— whether you've already been vaccinated or not.

Select submissions will be featured in our new TV ad campaign and one lucky submitter will be picked at random to receive a \$500 cash card.

Must be at least 18 years old and be a Vermont resident or live in Vermont part-time. State employees are not eligible to win \$500 cash card.

Learn more and enter contest

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

Interviews with people who have COVID-19 indicate that some assumed they had a cold or a sinus infection, instead of first thinking they might have 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. Registration is required.

It's free and easy! [Watch a video about what to expect.](#)

Find testing sites

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.
- Get Vermont-specific information in our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- Sign up for [the COVID-19 Weekly Email Update](#).
- Find information sheets, posters and toolkits, as well as translated materials on our [Resources web page](#).

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.
- 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

From the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), as April 2, 2021:

- 213,656 (38.9%) Vermonters have received a least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 126,800 (23%) Vermonters have completed their COVID-19 vaccine.

Check out our [Weekly Data Summary](#) for an in-depth look at COVID-19 in Vermont, including demographics of people who test positive, outbreaks, and reported symptoms, hospitalizations and deaths.

Visit [COVID-19 Current Activity](#) for up-to-date information on COVID-19 positive cases across Vermont.



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