



April 30, 2021

## Vermont eases outdoor mask requirements, moves to Step 2 of Vermont Forward Plan

Governor Phil Scott announced today that as of May 1, masks will only be required outdoors in situations where a 6-foot distance cannot be maintained.

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, said this change is based on science that shows the risk of transmission when outdoors is very small.

“This is why, now when you’re outdoors, masks will only be required when you’re in a crowd or with multiple households, where you can’t keep a 6-foot distance from others,” Dr. Levine said. “This is regardless of whether you are vaccinated or not.”

Examples of when you do not need a mask include: if you’re outside on a run, your family is on a hike or out for biking, your kids are having an outdoor playdate, you’re on the sidelines watching a baseball game or heading to the beach with plenty of space around you.

“But, as before, if any of your activities turn into a crowded situation, have your mask with you in case you need it,” Dr. Levine said.

He suggested Vermonters can decide whether they need a mask by considering three elements:

- Outside
- Masked
- Distanced

“You need two of these three elements. For example – if you’re outside and distanced, you don’t need a mask. If you’re outside and not distanced, wear a mask. And if you’re not outside, you should wear a mask and keep a distance,” he said.

The Governor also announced that May 1 will mark the start of Phase 2 of the [Vermont Forward Plan](#), which moves additional business sectors to [universal guidance](#).

This next phase also sets new limits on gatherings, including social gatherings at a private residence and events at a venue. For indoor gatherings, there can be one unvaccinated person per 100 square feet up to 150 unvaccinated people (whichever is less), plus any number of fully vaccinated people. For outdoor gatherings, there can be 300 unvaccinated people, plus any number of fully vaccinated people.

**Learn more about the Vermont Forward Plan**

## Franklin and Grand Isle County residents — vaccine clinics are available near you!

Get vaccinated with no appointment needed! Several COVID-19 vaccine clinics in Franklin and Grand Isle counties will allow walk-ins for Pfizer vaccine TOMORROW (Saturday, May 1).

Walk-in clinics May 1 include:

- 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Congress and Main, 97 North Main St., St. Albans (50 spots)
- 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Collins Perley Sports and Fitness Center, 890 Fairfax Rd, St. Albans (75 spots)
- 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Grand Isle Fire and Rescue, 17 Hyde Rd., Grand Isle (25 spots)

Appointments are also available for the following clinics. Visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) to register:

- May 3 at Fairfax Rescue Station
- May 4 at Congress and Main, St. Albans
- May 4 at the Collins Perley Sports and Fitness Center

Vaccine appointments are also available across the state for all Vermonters 16 and older, so if you haven't yet made yours, sign up today! If you later book a vaccination that's more convenient for you, please be sure to cancel the original appointment.

Visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) to make an appointment through the state registration system or a pharmacy. If you can't make an appointment online or need help, contact the call center at 855-722-7878.

### Learn more on making an appointment

## Appointments now open for part-time Vermont residents and out-of-state students

Vaccine registration is now open to college students who are residents of another state and do not intend to stay in Vermont for the summer, as well as to people who live part of the year in Vermont.

Visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) to make an appointment or call 855-722-7878.

### Register for a vaccine

## Johnson & Johnson vaccine clinics have now resumed

Vermont is resuming use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in clinics around the state this week. The FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [announced Friday](#) that it has studied and confirmed the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine is recommended for people 18 years of age and older, and that the pause on its use since April 13 could be lifted.

Vermonters age 18 and older can make an appointment for a Johnson & Johnson vaccine clinic, or change an existing appointment, by visiting [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine). Certain participating pharmacy partners, including CVS and Walgreens, are making plans to also offer Johnson & Johnson vaccine. People can contact those pharmacies directly.

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD said that while the disruption in Johnson & Johnson vaccine was unfortunate, from a public health perspective the actions taken to pause and study reports involving a rare and severe type of blood clot were completely appropriate.

“This is public health at work. We have a responsibility to make sure the science is sound, so that people have confidence in the J&J, and all vaccines,” Dr. Levine said.

**Read the press release**

## **Vermont making good progress in vaccination and slowing the spread of COVID-19**

State officials said at Tuesday’s press conference that Vermont’s COVID-19 data continues to trend in a positive direction and we are [ranked one of the top states](#) in our vaccination progress.

“These are all indicators that we are doing the right things right now, from general prevention to outdoor activities, to — most importantly — getting vaccinated,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “But this does not mean our work is done here. We still need to keep it up, knowing those variants of the virus are still around us, looking for any opportunity to spread to the next person.”

Dr. Levine reaffirmed the thorough safety review done in relation to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine by the CDC, FDA and other experts, saying Vermont is pleased to be able to offer the vaccine across the state once again.

“We know this one-dose vaccine is especially helpful in bringing protection against the virus to certain populations where access may be more difficult. And that it remains an attractive option to people who want the ‘one-and-done’ approach,” he said.

Dr. Levine added that our vaccination progress is a core element of the [Vermont Forward](#) plan, allowing us to get together, travel, and visit shops and businesses with fewer restrictions.

“The goals we’ve set are realistic and achievable, but we still need your to help make this a reality —again, by getting vaccinated,” he said.

**See the Vermont Vaccine Dashboard**

## **Vermont honors Abenaki culture, history and heritage next week**

May 1<sup>st</sup> kicks off Vermont Abenaki Recognition and Heritage Week (ARHW), in which we honor Abenaki culture, history, storytelling and collective wisdom.

Wholeness is an essential part of overall health and wellness, and honoring our ancestors, traditions, land, and shared stories is essential to creating whole communities.

Join us in learning more about Indigenous health equity and the impact of connection to traditions and homeland: <https://www.alnobaiwi.org/blog/indigenous-health-equity>

**Learn more**

## Whether you traveled or have symptoms, COVID-19 testing is available

Remember, if you are unvaccinated (including children) and traveled outside the state, you must have a COVID-19 test within 3 days of returning to Vermont. For more details, visit [our website](#).

And if you have any [symptoms](#), no matter how mild, such as a headache, cough, fatigue, or a runny nose, 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.

Even if you don't have symptoms, 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!

**Find testing near you**

## 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).
- 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](http://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](http://healthvermont.gov)**

**From the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), as of April 30, 2021:**

- 335,587 (61.4%) Vermonters have received a least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 233,641 (42.7%) Vermonters have completed their COVID-19 vaccine.

Check out our [Weekly Data Summary](#).

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



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