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April 23, 2021

## Vermont officials awaiting federal guidance on use of J&J vaccine

At Friday's press conference, Vermont officials noted the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is meeting today to review data related to the "paused" Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and hope to provide additional information on what the outcome will mean in Vermont as early as Saturday morning.

"We will be preparing guidance for Vermonters and for Vermont clinicians this evening," said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. "If there are no major stipulations on who should be offered the vaccine, we will then develop even more opportunities for how to access this vaccine."

Human Services Deputy Secretary, Jenney Samuelson, added: "During this pause we have been watching closely and planning. Depending on the outcome of the advisory committee, we could begin vaccinating as early as Tuesday in the Northeast Kingdom."

You can stay up to date on new information when it's available on our website and social media accounts (@healthvermont).

**Get the latest vaccine updates**

## COVID-19 vaccine clinic available for members of the Abenaki community this Sunday

Members of the Abenaki community are welcome to sign up for a clinic this Sunday, April 25, at the Abenaki Tribal Office in Swanton from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

You can call 855-722-7878 and ask for the vaccine clinic at the Abenaki Tribal Office in Swanton. If you are unable to make it this Sunday, you can access any clinic run by the state or a BIPOC clinic in Burlington led by the Racial Justice Alliance, Vermont Professionals of Color, and other partners in Burlington.

**Learn more on making an appointment**

## Part-time Vermont residents, including out-of-state college students, can make vaccination appointments starting April 29

On April 29, vaccine registration will 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. This opportunity will be based on the vaccine supply we receive from the federal government.

Create an account now at [HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine) to get all the information you need to register starting April 29!

**Register for a vaccine**

## Getting calls from the Health Department for a vaccine standby list

If you made an appointment through the state registration system that is three weeks or more away, you may get a call to ask if you are interested in being on the standby list.

The call may come from a Vermont number or may appear to come from another state. You will only need to answer “yes” or “no.” You will not be asked for your contact information or any other personal information since you are already in our system.

If you agree to be on the list, don’t cancel your existing appointment! It will be cancelled for you AFTER you receive the vaccination if you get called in as a standby. If you don’t get called in, keep your original appointment.

Please do not call the Health Department to be put on the standby list.

## Tomorrow (April 24) is Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Dr. Levine recognized at Friday's press conference the unique challenges COVID-19 has created for people with substance use disorder, including isolation and mental and emotional pressures that contribute to this disease.

Vermonters can help do their part to prevent prescription misuse on Take Back Day tomorrow (April 24).

“More than half of the people who misuse prescription medication get it from a friend or relative, often straight out of the medicine cabinet,” Dr. Levine said. “If you no longer need your medication, please do your part and dispose of it safely.”

Please visit [healthvermont.gov/DoYourPart](https://healthvermont.gov/DoYourPart) for more information about Take Back disposal sites near you, as well to request a free medication mail-back envelope.

And as always, help is available when and where you need it, he said. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use, visit [VTHelpLink.org](https://VTHelpLink.org) for support and referral

services.

### Find disposal options near you

## CDC data shows cases of COVID-19 among fully vaccinated people are very rare

Dr. Levine shared new data Tuesday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about “vaccine breakthrough” cases – situations where people who have been fully vaccinated still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus that causes it.

“Like with other vaccines, there will be some people who get sick, even though the vaccines are working as expected,” Dr. Levine said. “Because, as effective as they are, no vaccines are 100% effective at preventing illness. So, there may be some people who get COVID-19 even once they are fully vaccinated, but this is a very small percentage.”

According to the CDC, as of April 13, 2021, more than 75 million people in the U.S. had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 since December 14, 2020. During the same time, CDC received 5,814 reports of vaccine breakthrough infections from 43 U.S. states and territories — a rate of 0.007%. Just 7% (396) of people with breakthrough infections were known to be hospitalized and 1% (74) died.

Because this U.S. data relies on voluntary reporting from state health departments, it is likely not a complete picture, and there may be breakthrough cases not identified because some people don't get tested, Dr. Levine said.

In Vermont, 125 vaccine breakthrough cases have been reported.

“It is important to note these are still rare events,” Dr. Levine said. “This is even more evidence that these vaccines are highly effective, and, in the unlikely event a person develops a breakthrough case, the evidence is quite clear – the episode will be on the mild end of the disease spectrum.”

“This is a reminder of why we need to get this pandemic under control, and get as many people vaccinated as soon as possible, to lower the risk of spread to anyone,” he said. “In the meantime, we all need to keep up our prevention efforts — wearing masks, keeping a distance and avoiding crowds — in public until we are closer to our goal.”

### Learn more from the CDC

## Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff learns about Vermont vaccine efforts in visit

As part of Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff's visit to Burlington Wednesday to learn about vaccination efforts, our friends and partners at the Association of Africans Living in Vermont hosted a performance about vaccines.

On stage at the O.N.E. Community Center, AALV case manager and artist KeruBo and a member of the Health Department's Health Equity Team, Ruth Baldasty, performed the original song “Chanjo” — Swahili for vaccine.

After the song, they spoke with Emhoff about the importance of reaching community and helping to address misinformation through music and creative outlets. Emhoff shared his appreciation for this work and how this aligns with the nationwide efforts to expand vaccine access. See a video of the conversation on [AALV's Facebook page](#). Watch the [Chanjo music video here](#).

Emhoff also visited the Community Health Centers of Burlington, which held a clinic focused on vaccinating communities of color. The husband of Vice President Kamala Harris had the opportunity to speak with people who were getting vaccinated. He also met with state and local leaders and joined a roundtable discussion about vaccination in underserved communities.

**Visit AALV's Facebook page**

## Vermont marks 1.5 million COVID-19 tests performed

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, recognized the incredible progress of Vermont's testing capabilities at Tuesday's press conference, as the state surpassed 1.5 million tests performed, with more than 372,000 people tested.

"It is really Vermonters who have helped us reach this point — your willingness to get tested, and your understanding of why it is so important, have been essential to slowing the spread of the virus," Dr. Levine said. "Now, we are finally in a place where testing is highly accessible. It's still free, and easy to do."

Dr. Levine said that we expect Vermonters will continue to use this critical tool under Vermont's new travel policy, which requires a test within 3 days of travel for anyone who is unvaccinated. In addition, anyone with a possible exposure to the virus or with a possible COVID-19 symptom should get also tested and stay home and away from others while they wait for their result.

**More on getting tested**

## 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

**From the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), as April 23, 2021:**

- 305,123 (55.8%) Vermonters have received a least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 210,300 (38.5%) Vermonters have completed their COVID-19 vaccine.

Check out our [Weekly Data Summary](#) to learn more about facilities in Vermont that have experienced more than one COVID-19 outbreak.

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



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