

Update: June 8, 2020

Stowe Personalized Medical Care

Update for Patients of Stowe Personalized Medical Care from Dr. Bisbee

How is Vermont doing with COVID 19? As of June 8, there have been 1,063 cases of COVID 19 in Vermont. In Lamoille County, there have been only 29 cases. Interestingly, there have not been any COVID 19 cases in Johnson, Waterville, Hyde Park, Belvidere or Eden. The Lamoille County cases have mainly been in Stowe and Morrisville.

Spike in cases this past week: On June 4, 36 cases were identified in Winooski, Vermont. Then on June 5 only 1 case identified. At the end of May, we seemed to be done with our first wave and there were only 1-3 cases a day. But on June 6, 19 new cases were identified. Does this mean we will start our "second wave"? Is it due to a change in our behavior, like participating in demonstrations in Burlington and/or Montpelier? Is it just a fluke? We will see. Keep safe, wears masks when you are near others, and wash hands frequently.

Restart Vermont: Travel restrictions are starting to be lifted: Effective June 8th Vermonters may travel outside of Vermont to certain counties across New England that have similar active COVID 19 cases (< 400 active COVID cases/ 1 million population), and when they return they do not have to quarantine for 14 days. This does not include some of the counties in southern New Hampshire or southern Maine Coast.

Businesses Reopening: The Governor has given instructions on how to open retail businesses and restaurants. Businesses that open need to keep 6 feet between co-workers, limit occupancy of common area, employees must wear a mask when in the presence of others. In the case of retail cashiers, a translucent shield or "sneeze guard" is acceptable in lieu of a mask. Employees must have free access to soap and water or hand sanitizer and this is required frequently and before entering and leaving the job site. Restrictions for indoor dining have been made and basically it limits it to 25% of capacity or 25 guest and staff whichever is greater. Recommendations are changing every week. For more information you can visit healthvermont.gov website or **visit the website of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development at accd.vermont.gov**

Antibody testing is not really available yet: UVM has announced that antibody testing is available by sending it to the lab at the Mayo Clinic. However, testing needs to be approved by the Pathologist at UVM. Antibody testing has not been shown to be reliable, reproducible and is difficult to make reservations. For instance, even if you are positive for IgG antibody, you may still be able to get a new infection of COVID 19. It is not recommended that antibody status be used to makes decisions regarding employment, travel or immunity at this time. With your doctor, though, it can be helpful in some situations.

You can get a COVID 19 nasal swab tests: As of May 21, 2020, "pop up testing" started in Vermont. Patients can get a test even if they don't have symptoms. At first, it was not easy to get an appointment but it seems to be getting better. New dates will be announced and you

can be placed on a waiting list if appointments are not available in your area. Registration can be done by visiting the website, <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/popups>.

Weekly COVID data in Vermont is available at [Healthvermont.gov](https://healthvermont.gov).

Stay safe and wear masks and avoid close contact with others. If a business is not being safe, avoid the business. Do what you can to support local businesses but stay safe in the process.

Should I put off my medical concerns? It is not a good idea to put off any significant medical concerns. Going to the hospital or emergency room for evaluation can be done safely. Stowe Personalized Medical Care is seeing patients in the office one at a time, and patients must wear a mask, just like the staff. We ask you to wear a mask to keep Dr. Bisbee and the staff safe from catching COVID 19.

Specialists are using Video conferencing and phone virtual visits and consultations do not have to be put off. Non-emergent medical tests and appointments can be now done by using proper restrictions. If a medical office is not asking patients to wear masks and not following guidelines, you should avoid going to that office.

General recommendations: Elderly patients should continue to stay at home as much as possible. Patients with medical conditions and/or are over 70 years old should make arrangements to get groceries delivered. A cloth mask is recommended when you are near other people (closer than 6 feet). You do not need to wear a mask when you are by yourself, in your car, or outside walking by yourself but have a mask handy if you are potentially coming within 6 feet of others. Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Avoid touching your face, your eyes, and nose with unwashed hands or gloves. Avoid contact with people that are sick. Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or Lysol or Clorox wipes.

Symptoms to watch for: Patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reported mild-to-severe respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, and sore throat). Other symptoms may include fatigue, weakness, lethargy and headache. Diarrhea and gastro-intestinal symptoms can also be possible symptoms. Call to discuss your symptoms. Do not go to the hospital or emergency room before you call and speak with Dr. Bisbee.

Office Hours: The office is open 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Dr. Bisbee is available to help you if you need medical care. The office door is locked and you should call ahead as many things can be taken care of by telephone. We call you ahead of your appointment to make sure you are not showing signs of infection. Dr. Bisbee and staff wear masks and we only have one patient in the office at a time. **Patient's family and/or companions/driver are not allowed in the office with the patient at the time of their visit.** Exceptions will be for one parent of a dependent patient under 18 years old. We wipe down the exam room between each patient. We don't allow anyone to sit in the waiting room.

We have been calling each patient to check on how they are doing and to ask what their individual health concerns are. Well visits, such as follow-up for hypertension and diabetes,

physicals, and other routine appointments can be scheduled. Call the office at 802-253-5020 or call Dr. Bisbee's cell phone after hours for emergent issues.

House calls: Dr. Bisbee will do house calls when necessary.

Staff are safe: All of the staff have been tested for COVID 19 and we plan to do testing for the staff on a regular basis.

Who should go to the Emergency Room? If you have a life threatening medical issue such as a heart attack or stroke, call 911 without delay. If you are not having life threatening symptoms, call Dr. Bisbee first as he is available by phone 24/7. Patients in Lamoille County without a PCP can call Copley Hospital (802-888-8642) to discuss their individual situation.

What Healthcare appointments should I cancel: Consultations and follow up appointments with specialists are now being done by video conferencing and sometimes in person with strict precautions. Dental offices are opening up with precautions. Physical Therapy practices are now seeing patients and using appropriate precautions. Chiropractor office are seeing patients with appropriate precautions. If patients are not being asked to wear a mask or if your healthcare provider is not wearing a mask, you are going to the wrong provider.

Basic recommendations, stay the course:

1. Shop when there are fewer people at the grocery store.
2. Buy enough groceries for 2 weeks so you can avoid multiple trips.
3. Wear mask and gloves when you may potentially be within 6 feet of others.
4. Don't handle food and packages, look at it and only pick it up if you are going to buy it.
5. Don't bring your own shopping bags into the store.
6. Wash hands as soon as you come into your home.
7. Be kind to others and only buy what you need so others can get what they need.
8. Even if a store doesn't require you to wear a mask, you should still wear one to protect others in your community.

What activities can I do? Take a drive in the car, go outside and walk. Work in your garden. You can organize a social gathering with a few friends but it takes some work to organize it safely, keep the 6 foot rule, (10 feet is even better) and think through how you will handle things like bathroom availability, sitting arrangements, sharing (or not sharing) food to limit closeness. Lots to think about.

After hours: All Stowe Personalized Medical Care patients have Dr. Bisbee's personal cell phone and email, and they can text or call him anytime they have an urgent medical problem.