

Update: November 20, 2020

Stowe Personalized Medical Care

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

COVID-19 In Vermont: Latest Updates (11-19-2020)

- The Vermont Department of Health reported **another record-breaking number of COVID-19 cases Thursday** and another death.
- Vermont reported its 60th and 61st COVID-19 deaths this week, which means **three people have died in November alone**, following three months without a single COVID-19 death.
- There were **148 new positive COVID-19 cases on Thursday**, the highest daily total reported since the start of the pandemic.
- **The number of COVID-19 tests that are positive has risen to 2.1%.**
- **Fifty** of the new coronavirus cases were in Washington County, which has seen more cases than any other county in the past two weeks.
- There were **36** new cases were also identified in Chittenden County.
- All other counties had at least one new case.
- In all, **17** people are hospitalized, **one** of whom is in the ICU.

Get more updates and resources on COVID-19 in Vermont at VPR.org.

COVID is starting a third wave in our country, and we are starting to see increased numbers here in Vermont. It is time to "double down" on CDC recommendations, wear masks, wash hands and try to keep at least 6 feet apart (10 feet is even better).

For up to date information about restriction, regulations and mandates in Vermont go to:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19>

What have we learned since March: Masks, hand washing and socially distancing are most important. You don't need to wipe off groceries or keep them in a garage for 3 days. We have come a long way. Now we know that mask wearing is the main way we can defeat this virus. It looks like the COVID vaccine is coming in the next month or two but the general public will not be able to get it until next spring at the earliest. Even then mask wearing and keeping a safe distance will be important. Vulnerable patients, the elderly and patients with chronic medical conditions will likely get the vaccine first. Healthcare workers, especially front line nurses, will likely be next in line so we can keep treating COVID patients in our hospitals and ICU.

Is everyone wearing a mask like the CDC recommends? We all see people who refuse to comply with CDC recommendation and don't believe in wearing a mask. Mask wearing has become a partisan issue even after the November 3rd election. In October 20, a National Geographic survey reported 92% of Americans report they "wear a mask all or most of the time". There are still many places in the U.S. where a much smaller percentage of people wear masks. The percentage is growing but we will likely never reach 100%. Just like not all children receive the recommended vaccinations, and it is not likely that 100% of the country will accept the COVID vaccination. So what can you do? Wear your mask and stay a safe distance away from others and wash your hands as we wait for the rest of the country to comply with common sense and scientifically recommended recommendations.

The CDC recommends that no one travel on this Thanksgiving week due to the high risk of being exposed and spreading COVID. They also warn that College students should stay in place and not travel home for the Thanksgiving break. Anyone coming into Vermont should be tested for COVID on arrival and quarantine for 7 days. If the COVID test is negative, a second test should be done after 7 days. If both tests are negative then the quarantine can be lifted.

We can get through this together and protect each other by wearing a mask and socially distancing, and resist the temptation to be in large gatherings. It will become very hard to do this with the coming holidays.

Where can I get a test for COVID? You need an order from your doctor which can be sent to

1. Copley Hospital (or any hospital close to you) but you need a doctor's order. After the order is sent, there is a procedures to schedule the test. Copley is testing 7 days a week and the volume of tests has increased dramatically. The wait time for results can be 1-2 days or as long as 4-5 days depending on the volume of tests being collected.

2. Kinney Drug, Morrisville (as well as other locations) is conducting tests twice a week but they are full until December. Kinney Drug has partnered with UVM to offer COVID testing. This test is not a serology/ antibody test, and will not tell you if you had COVID in the past. This test is for testing asymptomatic community members for COVID 19 virus. Go to; <https://secure.kinneydrugs.com/pharmacy/covid-19/>

3. Waterbury Ambulance Service, 1727 Guptil Road, Waterbury Center. Set up your appointment by going to <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing/where-get-tested> For further information contact Executive Director Mark Podgwaite at 802-244-5003

Monday and Tuesday 9 AM- 2PM

Wednesday 5PM -8 PM

Thursday- Sunday 9 AM- 2PM

4. Walgreens on Susie Wilson Road, Essex Junction. Call (802) 872-1800 to schedule the test. This is the self-administered anterior nasal swab test. They have appointments 7 days a week 9AM- 5PM. They are booking appointments several days out.

5. Clear Choice, 1200 Williston Road, Burlington. Call (802) 448-8205 to schedule an appointment, no referral needed. May take up to 10 days for results.

For other testing sites go to: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing/where-get-tested>

Restart Vermont Travel Restriction: All Travelers coming to Vermont must be tested upon arrival and quarantine for 7 days. A repeat test is also required after 7 days. For up to date information go to <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>.

The Guidance for Vermonters has not changed:

1. If you have a medical emergency call 911 or go directly to the hospital.
2. If you are having even mild symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, call your health care provider and ask if you should be tested. Keep your medical provider updated if your symptoms worsen.
3. Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet, wash hands and wear a mask when near others, whether inside or outside.
4. Don't travel outside Vermont. <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>
5. Discourage family and friends from traveling to visit from outside Vermont

Testing options: The nasal swab PCR test is still the best test to get. The PCR test is with a nasal swab and is used at most testing sites. The "Antigen test" is not reliable and has high false negative rate (up to 50% false positive rate). Repeating a COVID test after you have been diagnosed with COVID is not recommended as this can be positive for a long time after having COVID. Antibody testing has not been shown to be reliable, reproducible and it is not recommended to make recommendations based on the test results. It is not recommended that Antibody status be used to make decisions regarding employment, travel or immunity at this time. You should work with your primary doctor to get the best correct test.

How long am I contagious after testing positive? The CDC says that you are contagious and should stay isolated/ quarantined for 10-15 days after developing symptoms. 10 days for mild cases and 15 days for more severe cases that are not hospitalized.

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 at this time. However, in the next 60 days, this may change. Remember, you can always call Dr. Bisbee on his cell phone for urgent questions. We are seeing patients in the office one at a time as long as you 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.

Because of the increase incidence of COVID in Vermont and New England, we will not be scheduling wellness exams and non-urgent medical visits until later this winter or next spring. We expect the number of COVID cases to continue to rise. We encourage you to call us for any medical issues or any medical concerns.

General recommendations: Elderly patients should continue to stay at home as much as possible. Patients with chronic medical conditions and/or are over age 70 should be especially careful. 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. Washing hands, as much as possible, is recommended. Avoid touching your face, your eyes, nose with unwashed hands or gloves. Avoid contact with people that are sick. Wearing gloves is not a necessity. As soon as you touch something, the glove is just as contaminated as an ungloved hand.

Symptoms to watch for: Patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reported mild-to-severe respiratory symptoms (fever, cough and sore throat). Only about 50% of people with COVID have a fever at the time they are diagnosed. Other symptoms include fatigue, weakness, lethargy, headache, and loss of taste or smell. 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 Dr. Bisbee.

Office Hours: The office is open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. Dr. Bisbee is available to help you if you need medical care. 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 only one patient is in the office at a time. We wipe down the exam room between each patient. We don't allow anyone to sit in the waiting room.

Can I get a Flu shot? Absolutely, you should call to make arrangements for your flu shot. We will come out to your car to administer your influenza shot at the time of your appointment.

Staff are safe: Dr. Bisbee and his staff are tested for COVID 19 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 activities can I do? This gets a little confusing as the governor allows indoor dining with strict precautions but has discouraged groups of friends and family to congregate. They have discouraged families from getting together for Thanksgiving unless you are in the same "bubble". Your "Bubble" is your immediate family and very few friends who are isolating the best they can from others. We are all getting very tired of isolating. It is getting tricky to figure out how to socialize with friends and family, especially now that outdoor dining is not an option. Mandates and recommendations change frequently and recently have become stricter.

Take a drive in the car, go outside and walk, weather permitting. Keep the 6 foot rule, (10 feet is even better). You can walk outside with a friend if you keep a distance of more than 6 feet. "Most of this is common sense and unfortunately a significant percentage of Americans don't have it".