

Vermont Agency of Education



Dear Superintendents and Independent School Heads:

With school starting up in the coming days, we are once again asking that you communicate with your parent and family communities about the importance of vaccination. Vaccination for all Vermonters who are eligible is the key to keeping our schools, our families and our communities safe. Vaccines are the surest way to prevent serious illness and death, prevent widespread outbreaks in our schools and our communities, and, ultimately, move past the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State of Vermont urges every Vermonter who is eligible to get vaccinated as soon as possible, and particularly anyone who is in the 12-18 age group. Vaccines remain highly effective at preventing severe illness and death, as well as preventing the spread of COVID-19. Vermonters who are age 11 and under should get vaccinated as soon as an Emergency Use Authorization occurs for their age group. The state is actively planning additional school clinics for when that happens.

Included in this email are the following.

- A [letter from myself and Dr. Levine](#) to all Vermont parents and guardians, urging them to get their children vaccinated. We request that you share this letter with your learning community. Translations are [available on the Health Department Website](#) for the following languages: Arabic, Burmese, French, Kirundi, Napali, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Vietnamese.
- [Talking points from the Health Department](#) (below), for your consideration when messaging the importance of vaccination to your community. Please check the Health Department website frequently for updates.
- [A set of posters and social media-sized graphics for your use.](#)

Thank you for your assistance to date in hosting and promoting vaccination clinics in your area. Thank you again for assisting us in communicating these important messages.

Sincerely,

Daniel M. French, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education

Vaccine Talking Points

Updated as of August 19, 2021

Regularly check our vaccine website as the points are continually updated.

- healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine
- healthvermont.gov/covid-19/faqs
- healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine#booster

-The Delta variant of this virus has changed the game, for the U.S. and here in Vermont.

-Nonetheless, the vaccines are doing what they are designed to do — prevent severe illness, hospitalization and death.

-The vaccines are estimated to have saved some 279,000 lives and prevented 1.25 million hospitalizations (according to a study led by Yale School of Public Health). That's pretty amazing to consider.

-With the original coronavirus, it was estimated that each infected person could be expected to spread it to as many as two or three additional people. With the Delta variant, the CDC estimates that, on average, each infected person may spread it to five or more people.

-This means anyone who is unvaccinated — both people who have chosen not to get vaccinated AND children under 12 who cannot get vaccinated right now — are at greater risk of getting and spreading the virus.

-Fully vaccinated people are highly protected from serious illness, hospitalizations and deaths. But some vaccinated people can still become infected and possibly spread the virus.

-We have a very powerful tool — vaccines that are highly effective at preventing the most serious outcomes of the COVID-19 virus, including against the Delta variant.

-We have learned a great deal about the virus – an almost unprecedented amount – in the more than 18 months of this pandemic.

-Unfortunately, one key aspect we now know is that the virus continues to evolve. And right now, the most contagious version of it, the Delta variant, is firmly established in the U.S. and found in nearly all cases here in Vermont.

-Because it is so contagious – more than twice that of the original strain – it is quickly moving through our unvaccinated population, causing cases to rise and contributing to more community spread and outbreaks.

-That means we are seeing cases and outbreaks in our communities again, in camps, workplaces, and other settings.

-Hospitalizations and the number of people in the ICU are rising again too. The majority are unvaccinated people.

-The virus is also leading to some cases in vaccinated people, but again, those people are still protected from severe illness.

-Everyone who is eligible for vaccinations should get vaccinated as soon as possible — because that protection is how we can ensure people are safe and healthy

-There are about 75,000 people in the state who are not yet vaccinated – some because they are not yet eligible, but many who are....

-The so-called breakthrough cases are not a reason to not get vaccinated – in fact it's exactly the opposite

-If you are vaccinated, you are well protected from the worst outcomes, including from this variant.

-Yes, breakthrough cases do occasionally occur, and cases are generally mild. But vaccination provides you with an 8-fold lower risk of getting ill from Covid and a 25-fold lower risk of hospitalization and death.

-People who have been vaccinated are far, far less likely to experience serious illness, hospitalization or death if they do become infected. The majority of severe outcomes are almost exclusively in the unvaccinated.

-Here's why: After vaccination, your body has new defenses to fight that infection. That's why you are so much better protected.

-The real danger of Delta is among those who are not vaccinated.

-If you are not vaccinated but could be, you are leaving yourself without protection to an often-serious illness that has killed about 270 of our friends and loved ones.

-The risk doesn't stop there. People who are not vaccinated are the biggest drivers of virus spread – which allows for more cases, more outbreaks, more hospitalizations and more deaths.

-Getting your shot is very important if we are going to be able to slow the spread – to give the virus fewer people to infect to protect those who cannot get vaccinated, like infants and immunocompromised children, and to give the virus fewer chances to mutate into something even stronger and more contagious than the Delta variant.

-Getting vaccinated is not about politics, it's not an agenda. It is public health.... Medical science plain and simple.

-Please get vaccinated. We don't want you to get sick, we don't want you to end up in the hospital, and we certainly don't want you to die.

Vermont Department of Health's COVID-19 Web Page

AOE COVID-19 Guidance for Vermont Schools Web Page

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