

COVID-19 Vaccine Program Update

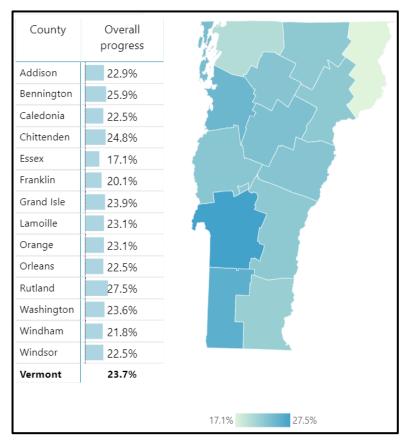
Health Department - Immunization Program

March 11, 2021

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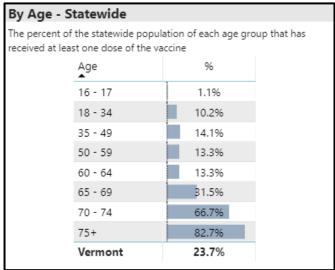
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Vermont Vaccination Data (updated 3/10/2021)

Approximately 24% of the Vermont population has received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, ranging from 17.1% to 27.5% by county. Uptake in the 75+ population is over 80%. See the COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard for more information.



Current State of COVID-19 Vaccine in Vermont

COVID-19 Vaccine Currently Allocated to:

- Vermont clinics are currently being run by
 - Hospitals
 - Health Department District Offices for use in Point of Distribution clinics (PODs)
 - The National Guard
- Serving Home bound populations
 - Home Health and Hospice
 - Emergency Medical Services
- Pharmacies (federal and state enrolled)
 - Kinney Drugs (20 stores)
 - Walgreens (31 locations)
 - Walmart (6 locations)
 - Costco (1 location)
 - HealthDirect (serving Licensed Long Term Care)
 - Genoa (serving Licensed Long Term Care)
 - CVS (Barre, Morrisville)
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
 - NOTCH
 - o Little Rivers Health Care
 - Northern Tier Center for Health
 - Community Health Centers of Burlington Champlain Islands Rockingham Family Health – Springfield
- Soon to come on board
 - The Health Center Plainfield

For Primary Care Offices, the timeline to receive the vaccine is still unknown.

COVID-19 Vaccines Available:

- Pfizer-BioNTech
- Moderna
- Janssen / Johnson & Johnson
- Vaccine availability is regional. Always ask your patients which vaccine they received.

People Eligible to Receive Vaccine:

- Health Care Personnel (through local Hospitals only)
- Long-Term Care Residents and Staff (through a federal partnership, existing relationships, and EMS)
- Those age 65 and older (through local clinics or pharmacies)
- Those age 55 or older with <u>high-risk health conditions</u> (registration opened March 8th)
- Childcare providers, teachers, and school staff

Eligible Next (in order):

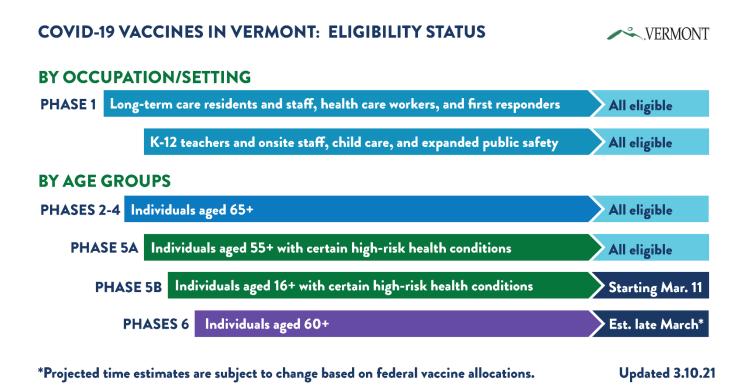
- Those age 16 or older with <u>high-risk health conditions</u> (registration opens March 11th)
- Those age 60 or older (estimated late March)

For up to date information on priority populations and eligibility, see <u>About COVID-19 Vaccines in</u>

Vermont or sign up for the Weekly COVID-19 Update

Advising Patients on How to Get Vaccinated

Vermont uses **age groupings and high-risk health conditions** to determine who can receive the vaccine next based on our primary goal with vaccination efforts – to save lives. We understand that you are likely getting many questions from your patients about whether they should get the vaccine. When having these discussions and making your recommendations, please keep Vermont prioritization in mind. People should get the vaccine **when they are eligible**.



If a patient is age 65, or older

Those <u>living in Vermont</u> that **are 65 years or older** can register for vaccine appointments through the Health Department

website: www.HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine. On this site, there is a link for registration or your patient can call 855-722-7878.

New clinics are being added regularly, and there are enough reservations for everyone. Second dose scheduling will occur at the first dose appointment.

If a patient is younger than 65 and has a highrisk health condition

03/09/2021 HAN: COVID-19 Vaccination Phase 5: Vermonters with High-Risk Conditions: Includes ICD-10 codes for eligible conditions

Phase 5 Eligibility Start Dates

Vermonters with certain high-risk health conditions will be able to make vaccine appointments beginning on the dates indicated below.

- March 8, 2021: ages 55 or older with one or more high-risk health conditions
- March 11, 2021: ages 16 or older with one or more high-risk health conditions

Appointments

Vermonters can make appointments online at HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine, or if they need help making an appointment, they can call 855-722-7878.

They will be asked:

- If they have one of the eligible high-risk health conditions.
 - o Note: People will not need to specify which condition they have.
- To name a health care provider who can confirm that they have one of the high-risk health conditions. If a person does not have a health care provider, they can still schedule an appointment.
 - People who do not indicate a health care provider may be contacted by a care coordinator to get more information and be offered a connection to care if they are interested.
- Eligible people can register at all of the sites open to other eligible age groups, including pharmacy partners. More information is available at HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine

Small Sample Confirmation Process through Providers

Health care providers do not need to confirm a patient's condition before an appointment is scheduled. After a person makes their vaccine appointment, we will try to confirm their eligibility due to a high-risk health condition by cross-checking it with data from VITL – Vermont's Health Information Exchange. Of people whose condition cannot be confirmed through this data, a random sample will be selected to be confirmed by their health care provider. The Vermont Department of Health will securely send the names of patients from this random sample to their identified

provider (compiled and sent in batches to the provider if asked to confirm more than one patient's condition). Providers will need to confirm that the patient has one of the listed conditions but will not need to indicate which condition.

Please respond within one business day via secure email. This process will not impede the person receiving their vaccination unless the confirmation process shows that they do not have a listed condition. If patients are not confirmed, their appointment will automatically move forward.

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High-Risk Health Conditions for Eligibility in Phase 5 of Vaccine Distribution

- Current cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis
- Heart disease, including heart attack, heart failure, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease (angina, acute and chronic ischemic heart disease), cardiomyopathies, and pulmonary hypertension. Does NOT include high blood pressure.
- Immunocompromised (weakened immune system) due to one or more of the following causes:
 - solid organ transplant, blood, or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, or other causes; or
 - o HIV with a low CD4 cell count or not on HIV treatment; or
 - o Prolonged use of corticosteroids or other immune suppressing drugs.
- Severe obesity (BMI of 40 or above)
- Pregnancy
- Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes
- Has one or more of the following disabilities:
 - o Chromosomal disorders, such as Down syndrome;
 - Intellectual disabilities (IQ of 70 or below);
 - Disabilities that compromise lung function (neurologic and muscular conditions such as muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, and multiple sclerosis).
- Sickle cell disease

This list is also available on the Health Department's website: healthvermont.gov/COVID19vaccine

If a childcare provider, teacher, or school staff

Individuals who provide or have student-facing roles in childcare and PreK-12 schools now have the option to be vaccinated. The PreK-12 education community and regulated childcare program staff will receive information on how and when they will be vaccinated and how to register **directly from their employers**.

Patients should not try to make an appointment until they hear from their employer—they will need a special code. Appointments will occur over the next few weeks. If a patient has questions, they should contact their program administrator or school's COVID-19 coordinator.

Eligible childcare programs can be found here: https://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd-blog/covid-19-vaccine-eligibility-individuals-working-regulated-child-care

Eligible PreK-12 school personnel can be found here:

https://education.vermont.gov/documents/preparing-a-count-of-vaccine-eligible-staff

Staff who live out of state and who work in a Vermont school are eligible for vaccination. Vermont residents who work in NH schools/child care programs are eligible for vaccine in NH.

If a health care worker (HCW)

Beginning **Monday, March 15th**, hospitals will be providing a passcode to eligible 1A providers in their catchment area that desire vaccination. This is open to anyone who is eligible under the current 1A definition. This passcode will allow the 1A provider to register at any community vaccination site.

The hospitals will be screening the callers, using a tool provided to them, to appropriately identify eligible individuals in their community. Many hospitals are still working on their process for managing incoming inquiries. We will provide updated information on their processes as we learn it including contact information for each hospital.

In the meantime, Walgreens pharmacies are vaccinating 1A and your staff can register on the Walgreens website.

Call 833-722-0860 and select Option 8 to get the specific hospital's contact information in your service area.

If a patient is homebound

The Homebound Vaccination Program partners home health agencies with emergency medical services (EMS) to offer in-home COVID-19 vaccination visits to eligible patients who are unable to travel to vaccination clinics.

The Health Department has introduced a call center where individuals, care managers, and care givers can request a visit.

802-863-7240 (toll-free 833-722-0860) M-F from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

These requests will be evaluated by trained care managers and directed to appropriate resources. If a patient is eligible to be vaccinated, and qualifies as homebound, they will be added to the centralized vaccination list. If the patient does not qualify, they will be directed to an appropriate local vaccine clinic and, if needed, care managers will share transportation resource information.

As a health care partner, the Vermont Department of Health asks that you help us identify homebound patients needing vaccination. If your organization has patients in need, and you have not already shared a list, please contact the Health Operations Center (AHS.VDHHOCCommander@vermont.gov) to be connected with appropriate vaccinating resources.

For the purposes of the homebound vaccination program, "homebound" is defined as an inability to leave the home for other scheduled medical or non-medical appointments.

Reasons for being homebound include:

- a diagnosed physical or emotional condition that is made worse by leaving the home, or
- the requirement of a significant effort and medical equipment (such as a wheelchair, stretcher, or lift device) to leave the home.

People who regularly leave the home for non-medical or medical appointments are not considered homebound, regardless of whether they leave with the assistance of medical equipment.

If a patient is pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or nursing

- There are limited data about the safety of COVID-19 vaccine for people who
 are pregnant, but research is planned and vaccine manufacturers are
 monitoring people in the clinical trials who became pregnant. For up-to-date
 information collected date refer to the COCA call from 03/09.
- Pregnant people are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including illness that results in ICU admission, mechanical ventilation, and death compared with non-pregnant people of reproductive age.
- It is recommended that certain groups (e.g., health care personnel) be vaccinated, but getting vaccinated is a personal choice for people who are pregnant.
- Though there are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccine in the lactating woman, or the effect on milk production, mRNA vaccines are not considered a risk to the breastfeeding infant.

	Routine testing for pregnancy before COVID-19 vaccination is not recommended. For more information on the considerations pregnant patients may discuss with their healthcare provider, please visit the CDC's <u>Vaccination Considerations for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding</u>
If a patient received both doses, but lost the federally issued card proving vaccination	If a patient asks you for a record of their COVID-19 vaccination, you may access this information on the Vermont Immunization Registry (IMR). A patient may also request this information from the IMR by contacting them directly at IMR@vermont.gov or 888-688-4667. Instructions are available for individuals Requesting Vaccination Records from the IMR. Please do not advise the patient to return to where they received their immunizations.
If a patient received the first dose in another state/location and is due for their second shot	We advise patients to plan for their first and second doses in the same location. In the rare instances where that is not possible there is a process to schedule 2 nd doses. Individuals may contact the Vaccine Registration Center at 855-722-7878 for more information on completing their series.
If your patient is a resident of another state	 Out-of-state residents may be vaccinated in Vermont if: They are a patient-facing health care worker in Vermont. They work directly with students or staff in a school building or licensed child care center in Vermont. They are employees of state, local, and county emergency response organizations (fire, emergency medical service, police) or work in a facility that houses inmates operated by the Department of Corrections. Residents of other states who have primary care providers in Vermont are not eligible for vaccination in Vermont, because primary care providers do not currently have vaccine. These out-of-state residents should be vaccinated in their home states.
If your patient received their first shot at a	We understand that Walgreens has had some challenges scheduling 2 nd dose appointments. These issues are being resolved, and patients should now be able to schedule second doses directly on the Walgreens portal:

Walgreens, and is
having trouble
scheduling their
second shot

https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19

Janssen Biotech Inc. (Johnson & Johnson) Vaccine

General information

- Requires 1 dose
- Can be stored at refrigerated temperatures for at least three months
- Recombinant vector vaccine uses a version of an adenovirus to include DNA that codes for the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein. This is similar to the current mRNA vaccines, except the spike protein creation starts with the DNA versus mRNA.
- The CDC does not have a preference for the vaccine based on any conditions. The first one is available is the best vaccine for anyone.

How does it work?

Uses an adenovirus vector, similar to a cold, which can not reproduce in our body. A viral vector vaccine is a type of vaccine that uses a modified, non-replicating version of a virus (the vector) to deliver the genetic code of an antigen into cells. The cells then use that code to produce copies of the antigen, which triggers an immune response. The virus used in a viral vector vaccine poses no threat of causing illness in humans because it has been modified or, in many cases, because the type of virus used as the vector cannot cause disease in humans. Learn more at CDC's Understanding and Explaining Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines page.

How effective is it?

- Vaccine efficacy against symptomatic, lab-confirmed COVID-19: 66.3%
- Vaccine efficacy against deaths due to COVID-19: 100%
- Vaccine efficacy against severe disease: 83.5%
- Vaccine efficacy against hospitalizations: 100%

Above data presented as a part of the COCA call on March 2, 2021

The Janssen vaccine was studied at different times, in different areas with different variants than the other available COVID-19 vaccines, and therefore comparisons are not possible. All available COVID-19 vaccines are highly protective against severe disease, hospitalizations, and death.

How it will be used in Vermont

The allocation of the Janssen vaccine to Vermont is uncertain at the time. Vaccine will initially be used on the Department of Corrections staff, and educators. Eventually, it will be more widely available throughout the state (approximately April).

Side effects

The most commonly reported side effects were pain at the injection site, headache, fatigue, muscle aches and nausea. Most of these side effects occurred within 1-2 days following vaccination and were mild to moderate in severity and lasted 1-2 days.

Training Opportunities

Janssen – COCA Webinar

Clinical Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Webinar: What Clinicians
Need to Know About Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine

- 1 hour recorded Webinar from March 2, 2021
- Safety and Efficacy of Janssen COVID-19 vaccines (10 minutes)
- Clinical considerations for the use of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (10 minutes)
- Implementation considerations for Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (2 minutes)
- Question and Answer session (35 minutes)

COVID-19 Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness – COCA webinar

Clinical Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Webinar: What Every Clinician Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness and How to Address Patient Questions and Concerns

- 1 hour recorded Webinar from March 9, 2021
- COVID-19 vaccine safety update including pregnancy data (20 minutes)
- COVID-19 vaccine efficacy update (5 minutes)
- Stategies for Addressing Patient Questions and Concerns (25 minutes)
- Question and Answer session (10 minutes)

Janssen – Manufacturer Webinar Series

Manufacturer Educational Webinar Series:

https://www.janssencovid19vaccine.com/hcp/webinars.html

Janssen will offer a regular educational webinar. There will be one session a day for 8 weeks, starting on March 8th: The webinar is approximately 30 minutes in length and addresses the following topics:

- Criteria and scope of Emergency Use Authorization
- Overview of viral vector technology
- Presentation, storage and handling
- Dose preparation and schedule
- Administration
- Important safety information
- Adverse event reporting requirements
- Information for vaccine recipients and caregivers

Pfizer-BioNTech Manufacturer Series	Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Training & Education March 10 th – 5 PM ET – <u>Attendee link</u> ; Password: AJsfJ34FWU8 March 11 th – 10 AM ET – <u>Attendee link</u> ; Password: jjQFa3T6sd3
CDC - COVID-19 Vaccine Training Modules	 COVID-19 Vaccine Training: General Overview of Immunization Best Practices for Healthcare Providers Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine (Johnson & Johnson): What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know (New March 6, 2021) Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine: What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know (Updated February 11, 2021) Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine: What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know (Updated February 23, 2021)

Pharmacy Programs

Pharmacies throughout the state are beginning to offer COVID-19 vaccines broadly according to the Vermont prioritization and rollout. Some of these pharmacies are enrolled through the state, receiving state allocation. Others are a part of the <u>Federal Retail Pharmacy Program</u>, and receive vaccine allocation directly from the federal government. Below are the pharmacies currently providing vaccine in Vermont, with information on locations, and how to register. Educators may be vaccinated at all pharmacies.

Kinney Drugs – State enrolled Kinney Drugs locations have been administering vaccines throughout the state. They have also participated in a large community clinic. Registration occurs through the <u>Kinney Drugs</u> Portal.

Walgreens – All 31 of Walgreen's retail locations are offering vaccines throughout the state. Registration must happen through the <u>Walgreens Portal</u>. Some Walgreens will serve those that are eligible for 1A as a Health Care Worker, and there will be three Walgreen's clinics for educators with the Janssen vaccine. Educators may also be vaccinated at retail locations.

Walmart – all 6 locations in Vermont are offering vaccines. Registration occurs through <u>HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine</u> as part of the Vermont scheduling system.

Costco – 1 location in Vermont is offering a limited amount of vaccine through their pharmacy. Registration occurs through https://example.com/hy-vaccine as part of the Vermont scheduling system.

CVS – 2 locations (Morrisville and Barre) will have appointments available starting 03/13. Registration must happen through the CVS Portal.

What You Can Do To Help

While you may not be directly administering vaccines through your offices yet, as health care professionals in our community, there are many ways to contribute to the effort.

Utilize the Department of Health Digital COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit

The Health Department is **now scheduling Vermonters ages 55+ with certain high-risk health conditions** for COVID-19 vaccine appointments – at HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine or by calling (855) 722-7878. Starting March 11 this group will be expanded to include Phase 5b, Vermonters ages 16+ with certain high-risk health conditions.

Our website includes helpful information on what information is needed to register, factsheet and videos for creating an online account and scheduling an appointment and adding a spouse or dependent as well as answers to many frequently asked questions.

We've updated the alert materials to reflect this expanded vaccination eligibility in our <u>Digital Vaccine Toolkit for Partners</u>. Please note, these toolkit assets are intended for the "general public," not for newly eligible educational and public safety systems that have different vaccination processes. Thank you for helping share this message within your networks.

Here are **quick links** to toolkit materials—separated into two sections by messaging type:

- 1. **Updated**: Eligibility-specific, "alert" messaging (currently 55+ with high-risk health conditions and soon expanded to 16+) (link)
 - a. Social media posts
 - b. Blog/Newsletter
 - c. Email
 - d. Letter

General, "evergreen" messaging about vaccines (<u>link</u>) – includes new posts about preparing for vaccine eligibility, safety and efficacy of vaccines, and importance of getting vaccinated.

- a. Social media posts
- b. Blog/Newsletter
- c. <u>Posters</u> (8.5"x11" and 11"x17"). Files for full-bleed posters for commercial printing are available upon request (available in multiple languages <u>here</u>).
- d. <u>Vaccine fact sheet</u>, "Things You Should Know About COVID-19 Vaccines." (available in multiple languages).

Talk with Your Patients About the COVID-19 Vaccine

New resources are available through the Health Department and the CDC regularly. As the trusted medical professionals for our Vermont community, we know you are likely fielding many questions related to the COVID-19 vaccine. Please see below for information on talking with patients about the vaccine.

- Heath Department Things you should know about COVID-19 Vaccines A
 printable resource to provide patients. The handout includes some of the
 most common questions received by the Health Department.
- CDC <u>COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit</u> Ready-made materials you can use to inform your healthcare teams and other staff, including Fact Sheets and FAQs, Printable Posters, Presentation Slides, Social Media messages, Videos
- CDC <u>COVID-19 Vaccine Recipient Education</u>: Materials with communication strategies and tips for addressing questions for COVID-19 recipients, including:
 - Understanding and Explaining mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines
 - *NEW* <u>Understanding and Explaining Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines</u>
 - Engaging in Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations
 - Tips on Answering specific COVID-19 questions

Help Eligible Patients with the Registration Process

The process to make appointments may seem complicated to your patients, especially in these early phases. Please familiarize yourselves with the process on healthvermont.gov/myvaccine.

Answers to the most common registration questions are located in the <u>Registration</u> and <u>Appointments FAQ</u>.

A patient may come to their primary care provider about questions in the CDC's Prevaccination Checklist for COVID-19 Vaccines.

Report Adverse Events in VAERS

Your patients may come to you to report a vaccine reaction after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine elsewhere. Safety is the first priority when it comes to vaccines. Please report all vaccine adverse reactions to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) in the timeliest fashion possible. Anyone can submit a report to VAERS, including patients or guardians. All VAERS reports can be submitted by visiting https://vaers.hhs.gov/.

Reach out to the Immunization Program at AHS.VDHImmunizationProgram@vermont.gov with any questions.

Additional Resources

Health Department - FAQ - Updated 03/11	Vermont COVID-19 Vaccine Program FAQ for Health Care Professionals – Updated regularly
Health Department Vaccine Information for Health Care Professionals	 Available Vaccines Vaccine Distribution in Vermont Vaccine Safety and Reporting Adverse Reactions Enrolling in the Vaccine Program Storage and Handling Inventory Management
Vermont Immunization Registry	The Vermont Immunization Registry (IMR) has developed many tools to assist practices: • Code Guidance for COVID-19 • Patients Immunized by Series Report COVID-19 • Not Up to Date Report for COVID-19 Vaccine For more information, access, and additional tools, visit the IMR website.
CDC - Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID- 19 Vaccines	 CDC has released updated clinical guidance related to mRNA vaccines. Summary of recent (March 3, 2021) changes: Clinical considerations added for use of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine. Updated recommendations for fully vaccinated people who subsequently develop COVID-19. Updated recommendations related to COVID-19 vaccination timing for immunocompromised people. Updated contraindications and precautions to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. Updated information on interpretation of SARS-CoV-2 antibody test results after vaccination.
CDC - <u>U.S.</u> COVID-19 Vaccine Product Information	Find a suite of information and materials needed for each specific COVID-19 vaccine covering administration, storage and handling, safety, and reporting. • Pfizer-BioNTech • Moderna • Janssen/J&J