

Messaging Toolkit for Schools: Celebrating the Spring and School Vacation Week

This toolkit offers messaging that you can share with families and school staff regarding health guidance for travel and gathering this spring. Information is changing rapidly, so we encourage you to watch the [Health Department](#) website for updates.

New Travel Guidance

The CDC recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated, especially now, when there are still high levels of spread. But if you do travel, make sure you understand Vermont's new policy. Effective April 9, 2021, unvaccinated Vermonters who have traveled outside the state must be tested within 3 days of returning to Vermont. The test you get must be for a current infection (like a PCR test), except it cannot be an antigen test (also known as a rapid test). You do not need to quarantine while you wait for your test result. But if you have any symptoms, stay home and away from other people. [Find free and fast testing near you.](#)

Gathering Guidance

To slow the spread of COVID-19 in Vermont, there are limits on gathering. **A household with children is considered an "unvaccinated household."** An unvaccinated household may gather with one other unvaccinated household. You can gather with multiple unvaccinated households, as long as you are with only one other household at a time. [Learn more about how to gather with other people safely.](#)

COVID-19 Prevention

There will always be some risk of COVID-19 when we leave home, but it is possible to live your life and stay safer. The virus that causes COVID-19 is circulating in Vermont and all around the world and can spread easily among family and friends when they don't know they have it. Please continue to follow the prevention steps to lower your risk of getting or spreading COVID-19. Imagine these steps as layers protecting us from getting and spreading COVID-19, so more layers mean less risk.

1. Keep your social circle small.
2. Stay at least 6 feet apart from people who don't live with you
3. Wear a mask
4. Wash your hands often
5. Spend time outside with friends and family
6. Stay home if you or anyone in your household is sick.
 - a. Do you wonder if you have [allergies or illness](#)? COVID-19 and seasonal allergies share many symptoms, but there are some key differences between the two. For example, COVID-19 can cause fever, which is not a common symptom of seasonal allergies.
 - b. Because some of the symptoms of COVID-19 and [seasonal allergies](#) are similar, it may be difficult to tell the difference between them, and you may need to get a test to confirm your diagnosis.

Key Messages for Families


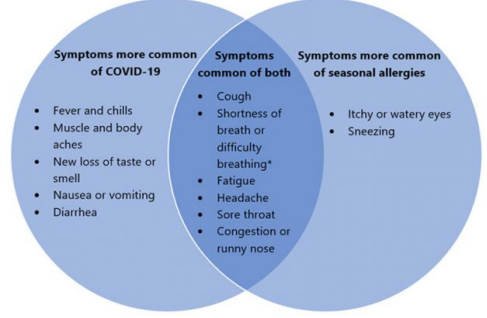



As more Vermonters get vaccinated, Governor Scott is slowly changing the guidance to allow people to gather and host visitors. On April 6, 2021 he released a reopening guide (The [Vermont Forward](#) Plan) to help Vermonters and local businesses see the path for a phased return to unrestricted travel, business operations, and event gatherings. The plan was developed by the Department of Health, the Department of Public Safety, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and uses [vaccination milestones](#) to ensure a safe easing of personal restrictions and continued reopening of the state's economy.

All Vermonters are encouraged to get the vaccine when it is their turn. At this time, [Education](#), Health Care, Sports/Organized Sports and Youth Summer Camps will retain individualized guidance and not move to universal guidance.

The COVID-19 virus is still circulating in our communities, and the only way to know if you have it is to get tested. Interviews with people who have COVID-19 indicate that some assumed they had a cold or a sinus infection, instead of first thinking they might have COVID-19. The best way to keep anyone who is unvaccinated – including your children – is to keep masks on faces, 6-foot spaces and avoid crowded places. Encourage outdoor play as much as possible. Try to be patient because as more people get vaccinated, and we spend more time outside, it will get harder for the virus to spread.

Remember that [symptoms](#) can sometimes be mild, such as a headache, cough, fatigue or a runny nose. So, if you have even just one of these symptoms, it's best to get tested. It's also important to avoid going to work, school or other places until you receive a negative result. COVID-19 is a highly transmissible virus, and this is how we can each protect our loved ones and our communities.

Messages to Share

Text	Image/Link
<p>Layer up the prevention strategies for the best protection against COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks on faces • 6-foot spaces • Uncrowded places <p>https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/protect-yourself-others/prevent-covid-19</p>	
<p>Sometimes it's hard to know the difference between seasonal allergies and illnesses like COVID-19. But if you or someone you live with have symptoms please stay home, call your medical provider and find out if you should get a COVID-19 test.</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/infographic-overlap-symptoms.html</p>	
<p>Spend time outdoors with others who you don't live with whenever possible. Put on your mud boots and find some puddles!</p>	
<p>We can't assume people are not infected/infectious with COVID-19 because they look okay. People without symptoms or with a recent negative test result can still spread COVID-19 to others. Interviews with people who have COVID-19 indicate that some assumed they had a cold or a sinus infection, instead of first thinking they might have COVID-19. The COVID-19 virus is still circulating in our communities, and the only way to know if you have it is to get tested.</p> <p>https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing</p>	
<p>If your family is hosting guests, have extra unused masks available, and encourage mask use by all.</p>	

Images to Use

If you choose to create your own messages, consider using any of these images that show families/children/teens having fun in ways that reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection.



Resources

- [COVID-19 in Vermont](#) (Department of Health)
- [Information for Vermont's businesses](#) (ACCD)
- [Information for Vermont's schools](#) (AOE)
- [Vermont Department of Mental Health](#)
- [Mental Health Support](#)