

Town of Middlebury
Emergency Management Bulletin
January 12, 2021

Concern Over Case Growth- Is the Danger At My Doorstep?

We hear concerns about the lack of specific information on the recent spread of COVID in Addison County. How can we keep ourselves safe if we don't have the information? VDH walks a thin line between public education, outreach, and privacy. They take great steps to ensure that the privacy of patients is protected and therefore don't release information that could tend to identify patients.

So how do you know if you've been infected by a person who is positive? VDH contact tracers follow up on all contacts that the person who tested positive (who met the criteria of an exposure) have had. If you haven't been contacted, then it's a good bet that you may not have been exposed. If you are otherwise concerned, register for a test. They are ubiquitous and free and done locally. In the meantime take safety countermeasures- mask up, avoid congregating, wash hands. Harden yourself against COVID. Practice good lung health (sorry smokers), wash your masks often, ask your health care provider about 5,000 IU daily of vitamin D3, exercise. If you can't get out to exercise and you have an incentive spirometer, use it if you can to help with lung health.

Contact Tracing is NOT a Prosecution Initiative

The purpose of contact tracing is to identify all those who may have had an exposure to a person who is positive for COVID and to get them tested. This is to help stop the spread by identifying asymptomatic people. In some cases, contact tracers have been met with a lack of cooperation and a refusal to answer questions, potentially for fear of being prosecuted for violating the Governor's orders. This will not lead to prosecution and responses are not public information. By cooperating you are helping to stop the spread. VDH contact tracers are not criminal investigators and have no charge to be such. There may be other, personal reasons for not cooperating, in any event, get tested, encourage those who you've been in contact with to get tested.

"Silent Spread" of COVID- Asymptomatic Spread- From the CDC

Persons with asymptomatic and presymptomatic infection are significant contributors to community SARS-CoV-2 transmission and occurrence of COVID-19. The following considerations are meant to help state, tribal, local, and territorial jurisdictions plan for expanded screening testing for SARS-CoV-2 to prevent or reduce silent spread of the virus. Jurisdictions should consider implementing an expanded screening testing strategy to rapidly identify people without symptoms (i.e., asymptotically or presymptomatically infected with SARS-CoV-2) who are contributing to the silent spread of infection, because they are unaware that they are infectious.. You can find the entire article here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/open-america/expanded-screening-testing.html>

By The Numbers

200,000 new cases have been reported in the greater northeast, a 17% increase. 13,000 people are currently hospitalized with Covid today in New York and New England. 51 of those are in Vermont with 10 Vermonters in the ICU. Vermont has registered 1,166 new cases in the past week. Current trends in Vermont indicate the potential for 300 new infections reported per day in Vermont by Mid-February.

That's a lot, but as yet doesn't exceed hospital capacity in the state, though it would be getting close. VDH reports there is more virus spread through communities now than at any previous time; many of the new infections have not been attributed to gatherings.