

Town of Middlebury
Emergency Management Bulletin
July 8, 2020

Travel Information

The Vermont Department of Health has determined that a rate of infection in any given county at 400 active cases per million population presents a low risk of disease transmission. Therefore, if you're staying in a county which has that rate or lower, you don't need to quarantine to come to or return to Vermont. So if you look at the Cross State Travel map on the ACCD website, <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel> the green counties throughout the northeast are those with a rate at 400 per million or less. All are within a reasonable driving distance of Vermont.

Perhaps you've wondered how they come up with this. The Department of Financial Regulation working with Johns Hopkins as the single information source, has developed an algorithm to figure all this out. If you are into exotic formulae, here's a link to explain how this is done: <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/DFR%20Travel%20Map%20Methodology.pdf>

Of Outbreaks, Clusters, and Airborne Droplets

This from Dr. Levin at VDH:

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, said at a press conference Tuesday that the outbreaks and clusters we are monitoring are not expanding significantly. While that does not mean they are over, he said it is a sign that our efforts to trace contacts of positive cases is working. In Vermont, 97% of positive cases are interviewed by contact tracers within 48 hours of their test result. "Timely interviews have been critical in interrupting disease transmission," Dr. Levine said.

Dr. Levine added that in some places in the U.S. where coronavirus cases are currently surging, contact tracing is no longer a viable strategy, and those states are returning to mitigation strategies – such as asking people to stay home. "The nation as a whole needs to learn from this experience right now," Dr. Levine said.

Dr. Levine also addressed recent news that a group of 239 scientists in 32 countries wrote [an open letter to the World Health Organization](#) outlining evidence that smaller particles of the coronavirus in the air indoors can infect people. While larger respiratory droplets fall to the floor mainly, these lighter, finer droplets — that are exhaled by all of us just from coughing or talking — can probably stay aloft for several hours, especially when there's poor ventilation or overcrowding. Infections can occur if you have prolonged indoor contact with those aerosols.

"The message from all of this is we should continue to wash our hands a lot, but you'll do a lot better if you also wear a facial covering," Dr. Levine said.

College and University Guidance

Middlebury College is following all the prescribed guidelines and more to mitigate COVID transmission when students arrive in late summer. Yes, it CAN be like herding cats. The arrival of 2,000 students, most from out of the area may cause concern, but to assuage your own concern, protect yourself – mouth and nose coverings, wash hands, you know the drill by now. If you become cavalier about it, that's when the risk goes up exponentially. Students or no students, on campus or off campus, it only takes one person, any person, to infect many others, and it doesn't have to be a college student. And now, there are a lot of out-of-state people in the area patronizing stores, restaurants, and intermingling. Some exercise caution, some do not. The bottom line is keep yourself from becoming infected and this includes regular washing of your masks and good mask management. The mask is more of a catcher's mitt than a reflective shield, it is entrapping whatever contamination is out there in those outer layers. The college and town are fully engaged in preparations for student arrival. Some of these efforts will be discussed at the Selectboard meeting on July 28 as one of the first agenda items. Input, concerns, suggestions are welcomed.

For those with students who are off to a Vermont college, and anyone else interested you can see the Governor's re-start plan at this link:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/content/restart-plan-college-and-university-campus-learning>

Information Flow

The Governor is now holding his pressers only twice a week- Tuesday and Friday, and the information flow from VDH and the State Emergency Operations Center has flowed to a trickle. In the meantime, we'll be following COVID issues that affect Middlebury and the area, keeping you informed on COVID status and mitigation activities as things open up, including the resumption of hotel occupancy, travel and quarantine issues, testing, and the arrival of students.