

**From:** [Office of the Provost](#)  
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**Subject:** Climbing COVID-19 Case Counts  
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OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

October 19, 2021

UVM Community,

Over the weekend, the state of Vermont reported the highest single new COVID-19 case count since the start of the pandemic. And yesterday, UVM reported the highest COVID-19 case count this semester. This is an important reminder that the COVID-19 pandemic continues, and we cannot let our guard down.

We have enjoyed a return to campus life that, with the exception of masking indoors, looks much like our vibrant campus pre-pandemic. We must remain vigilant in our efforts to prevent the spread of the virus in support of maintaining the UVM experience we all know and love.

The impact of the Delta variant is real. It is highly contagious and spreads quickly. Fortunately, 100% of our students are fully vaccinated, with the exception of a small number of students with religious and medical exemptions. Those who have tested positive have only mild symptoms as a result of being vaccinated. Remember, though, that COVID-19 transmission still occurs among vaccinated individuals.

The recent increase in positive COVID-19 cases is not traced to a single event—rather, it is the result of small gatherings such as birthday parties, travel out of state, or gatherings in apartments and other household settings where people are not wearing masks. We have no evidence that COVID-19 spread is **occurring** in the classrooms, the Library, the Davis Center or elsewhere on campus. Our precaution of requiring masks indoors is working and **is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

This is a good time to review the basics regarding protection against COVID-19:

- **Wear a mask**—Masks prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. Choose to wear a mask in settings where you will be in contact with anyone, for more than 15 minutes—especially if you are not six feet apart. And anywhere indoors on campus, it is a requirement that masks be worn.
- **Remember the symptoms**—Do not dismiss mild COVID-19 symptoms. Contact Student Health Services and get tested as soon as possible if you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. Until you know for sure that you do not have COVID-19, limit your interaction with others to reduce the

potential spread of the virus.

- **Limit non-essential travel**—Unless it is absolutely necessary, limit your travel. If travel is essential, consider testing before and after you travel.
- **Avoid gatherings**—We've all missed opportunities to get together and celebrate special occasions. Even if you know the people you are gathering with, mask and take other appropriate COVID-19 precautions.
- **Get tested**—Free COVID-19 testing is available to all faculty, staff and students at the Testing Center in the Davis Center. Test for yourself, your friends, your family, and your fellow Catamounts! Test if you are planning to travel and when you return, especially if you are visiting with or returning to those who are unvaccinated or have underlying conditions. Please schedule tests using the CoVerified app.

This week's tests results are a good reminder that COVID-19 still presents a risk to all of us, and that we must remain committed to the health and safety measures we know work. Our community has done an exceptional job throughout this pandemic—and we must continue those efforts. We appreciate your commitment and dedication to this effort to keep everyone safe.

We are ONE UVM!

Patricia A. Prelock, Provost and Senior Vice President  
Gary Derr, Vice President for Operations and Public Safety

