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American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter (AAPVT) Offers Guidance to Families with Children on How to Navigate the Summer and Stay Healthy and Active

MONTPELIER (June 10th, 2021) – Vermont pediatricians are offering guidance to families with children on how to navigate the summer and stay healthy and active.

Vaccines are the most effective tool we have to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Pediatricians are thrilled that Vermont is nearing the benchmark of 80% of its eligible population receiving at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Case rates, hospitalizations, and deaths have decreased thanks to these highly effective vaccines. As Vermont moves forward with its [reopening plan](#), it is important to remember that young children are not yet eligible for the vaccine and so warrant special consideration.

All families and child-serving settings will make their own decisions based on local factors, but AAP-VT is recommending the following based on current COVID case rates and rates of vaccination in VT:

- Unvaccinated children over 2 years of age as well as unvaccinated adults should continue to wear masks indoors when they are around other unvaccinated people.
- Given the low risk of transmission during outdoor activities, it is reasonable for unvaccinated children to not wear masks outside.

Masks have shown to be effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 as well as the spread of other respiratory infections. Pediatric hospitalizations due to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), influenza, and other viruses were at a record low this year even among children attending full-time childcare and school. As restrictions are loosened, many parts of the world have seen an increase in common respiratory viruses. These viruses can cause serious illness especially among the very young. Currently we are seeing an increase in pediatric hospital admissions in Vermont for respiratory illness caused by rhinovirus, a common respiratory virus.

- Adults and children who are sick should continue to stay home whether or not they are vaccinated. Employers can help in this effort by supporting a flexible sick day policy.
- When planning activities, we encourage families to have honest and clear conversations about comfort level with other families regarding masking, vaccination, illness, and other expectations.
- We are hopeful that children and adolescents will have a fun and rejuvenating summer. Recently, more summer activity and job opportunities have been made available. Visit the [Vermont Afterschool](#) website for more details.
- We recommend all adolescents eligible for the vaccine get it as soon as possible. AAP-VT has hosted a series of virtual family forums to discuss questions with families and give parents and

caregivers the information they need about vaccination. Check out the [AAPVT website](#) for past recordings and announcements of future forums.

As always, please feel free to reach out to your child's medical provider with any questions or concerns. We anticipate younger school-aged children will be eligible for the vaccine in the fall and infants and toddlers may be eligible by the winter. We are pleased that Vermont is leading the nation in vaccination rates but pediatricians won't fully breathe a sigh of relief until all of our patients are protected from COVID-19.