

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

5/18/20 COVID-19 UPDATE:

Your local health department is here to assist you with questions related to COVID-19 (new coronavirus).

GULF TESTING NUMBERS STATUS

Number of COVID-19 tests so far: 337

Number of negative tests: 336

Number of positive tests: 1

Please note: The demand for the testing and designated laboratory, may cause a slight delay in reporting as reflected on the Florida COVID-19 Dashboard.

For Daily Gulf County COVID-19 Updates straight to your phone: text GULFCOVID to 888777

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County: 850-227-1276

Florida Department of Health in Franklin County: 850-653-2111

There is also a hotline available at **866-779-6121** or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

PHASE 1: PLAN FOR FLORIDA'S RECOVERY

On May 15, 2020 Gov. DeSantis issued his Full Phase 1 Plan for Reopening. This plan will go into effect on Monday, May 18, 2020. To view the complete order, visit: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-123.pdf.

MAY2DAY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPANDED TESTING PLAN

The Department of Health is thankful for the number of individuals who have shown up to be tested during our "May2Day" Testing Project.

The goal behind this initiative is to test 2% of the population each month in order to align with the Governor's reopening phases. Each County Health Department (CHD) will coordinate with community partners to expand local testing offered to meet monthly targets. Test results will be reflected on the [Florida's COVID-19 Data and Surveillance Dashboard](#) as they come available.

Testing benchmarks set for each county:

Franklin: 247 per month

Gulf: 325 per month

UPCOMING DRIVE-THRU TESTING IN PORT SAINT JOE

On Wednesday, May 20th, from 9am to 3pm EST, public drive-thru testing will be held in Port Saint Joe at the WIG Building (Washington Improvement Group, also known as CareerSource), 401 Peters Street. Individuals must be 18 years or older to be tested. To enter testing site, please follow the signs and please stay in vehicles. Symptoms are NOT required for testing, and appointments are not necessary. For more information, call 850-227-1276.

Florida Department of Health

in GULF COUNTY

2475 Garrison Avenue, Port St. Joe, Florida 32456

PHONE: 850/227-1276 • FAX 850/227-7587

www.FloridaHealth.gov

TWITTER: HealthyFLA

FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth

YOUTUBE: fldoh

FLICKR: HealthyFla

PINTEREST: HealthyFla

TESTING

Call your health care provider first or if you are symptomatic to determine the need for testing. If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. In some cases, they are going to meet you in the parking lot. It's just a precaution. We are really trying to keep our healthcare workers safe. Other patients safe. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your physician will evaluate you for other possible causes of respiratory illness and also contact the county health department to coordinate COVID-19 testing.

PANCARE TESTING SITE IN PORT ST. JOE AND EASTPOINT

PanCare Health has lifted COVID-19 testing restrictions and is now offering testing to both symptomatic and asymptomatic (showing no symptoms) persons. PanCare will test anyone in the following category whether they display symptoms or have no symptoms:

- Healthcare facility workers
- Residents in long-term care facilities
- Persons 65 years of age and older
- Persons with underlying conditions
- First responders

People who do not meet the above requirements must have symptoms (cough, fever ≥ 100.4 , or shortness of breath) in order to be tested. Testing will be provided at no cost to the person being tested. If a person has insurance, they will bill the insurance for testing and write off any portion not covered. PanCare Health's COVID-19 response line team is available at (850) 215-4181 Monday-Friday 9:00a – 4:00p to conduct phone screenings.

ANTIBODY TESTING

For questions about antibody testing, contact the Florida Department of Health: Gulf (850) 227-1276.

CDC information about antibody testing can be found using this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html>

MENTAL HEALTH

COVID-19 have you feeling STRESSED/ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED/UNSURE? NEED SUPPORT? CALL 850-270-8911, available 9-5pm EST. If you are in need of immediate mental health services call one of the agencies below available 24/7:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- SAMSA Disaster Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or the Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741
- Florida Blue launched a 24-hour, free emotional support helpline for all Floridians. Any Floridian – even if uninsured or insured by another plan – can call 833-848-1762 for support in managing feelings of stress, anxiety, grief or fear related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Counselors cannot provide information on COVID-19 testing or treatment.
- Big Bend Community Based Care oversees a wide network of community partners in the fields of mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment and child protective services throughout an 18-county area in Northwest Florida, from Escambia to Madison counties. It uses a trusted network of accredited providers and acts as a centralized source of support and resources for its community partners. Florida residents can call the agency's hotline at 1-888-95-GetHelp or 1-888-954-3843 at any time, day or night, and staff a member will help connect them to a provider in their community, regardless of whether they have health insurance. For more information about Big Bend Community Based Care, visit BigBendCBCGetHelp.org.

CLOTH FACE COVERS/MASK

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. It is important to note that these face coverings:

- 1. Are not surgical or N-95 respirators, which continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and medical first responders, and
- 2. The use of cloth face coverings does not mean we can remove previously set social distancing measures.

For information on how you can make a facemask at home, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html> and watch this video <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There are several resources available for rural residents and business coping with the impact of COVID-19. Please visit the Rural Development Coronavirus Response page: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus>

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

We encourage any Floridian whose employment has been negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 to visit FloridaJobs.org and click on Reemployment Assistance Service Center to learn more about the program and watch a short video on how to apply. Click [here](#) for a direct link to instructions on how to apply for Reemployment Assistance. Select the hyperlink to download and view the [Reemployment Assistance Resource Guide](#).

If you can't apply by email you can pick up a paper application and submit it by mail. Below is the following pick up locations for paper applications in Gulf County. For more information call 850-229-1641.

- Port St. Joe – CareerSource, 401 Peters St.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES-BAY/ GULF/ FRANKLIN COUNTIES:

Financial Emergency/Hardship: 850-763-0475

1. Call First Monday of each month after 9am for screenings
2. An initial screening will take place on the phone to complete the application process and receive an appointment. a. Proof of need will be required: past due utility bill, proof of check stub from place of employment (before and after date affected).

FOOD PANTRY LOCATIONS

- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the Month-WIG Community Center, 401 Peters St., Port St. Joe
- Farm Share distribution will be May 18th at 4:00pm. Drive-thru pick up on a first come, first serve.
- Second Harvest of the Big Bend: 2nd Saturday of each month, Honeyville Community Center, 240 Honeyville Park Road. (3 family per vehicle limit – all families do not have to be present to receive food. Please, no children. Prepare for long wait times. Please ensure trunk/bed of vehicle has space available. Do not get out of your vehicle. Lower tailgates/lift trunks prior to turning in).

TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have been reported in all states, and some areas are experiencing community spread of the disease. Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.

CDC recommends you [stay home](#) as much as possible, especially if your trip is not essential, and practice [social distancing](#) especially if you are at [higher risk of severe illness](#). Don't travel if you are sick or travel with someone who is sick.

For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>

STATE ISSUED ORDERS:

To see ALL of Gov. DeSantis Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, visit: <https://www.flgov.com/covid-19/>

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

On April 16, Governor DeSantis issued [EO 20-104](#) which suspends the requirement that Floridians must recertify reemployment assistance status every two weeks.

FORECLOSURES & EVICTION RELIEF

On April 2, the Governor also issued [Executive Order 20-94](#), providing targeted, temporary relief from certain mortgage foreclosures and evictions for 45 days, without relieving an individual's obligation to make mortgage payments and rent payments.

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

On April 2, Governor Ron DeSantis issued [Executive Order 20-93](#), directing the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and other executive agencies to take necessary actions to improve DEO's Reemployment Assistance Program.

RESTAURANTS

[Per EO 20-123](#), restaurants and food establishments may serve patrons at indoor seating so long as they limit indoor occupancy up to 50% of their seating capacity, excluding employees. Social distancing requirements are still in place. Bar counters are to remain closed to seating and outdoor seating remains available with social distancing.

Gulf County Chamber of Commerce resource list: <http://business.gulfchamber.org/list/>

[Check out the Digital Directory: Restaurants in Gulf County and Mexico Beach, FL](#)

LOCAL UPDATES:

Gulf County- As of 5/12/2020, all of Gulf County is under a BURN BAN. All outdoor burning of yard trash, household paper products, bonfires, campfires, outdoor fireplaces and cooking fires are prohibited unless: 1) authorized by the Florida Forest Service; 2) for cooking of food exclusively within a contained gas or charcoal grill. The setting of fires to any grass, brush or forest covered land, unless authorized by the Florida Forest Service, shall constitute a violation of the law.

There are no new restrictions in place for beach activities. However, strict social distancing guidelines should be followed. All other national, state and local travel restrictions and guidelines apply. Including the governor's ban on vacation property rentals. Order to follow.

City of Mexico Beach-The Mexico Beach BOCC has opened the beach for all activities with no restrictions. However, strict social distancing guidelines should be followed. All other national, state and local travel restrictions and guidelines apply.

City of Port St. Joe- The Frank Pate Park boat ramp and associated parking area opens to the public.

Florida State Parks starting Monday, May 4, DEP will implement phase one to reopen the Florida State Parks. Please visit <https://www.floridastateparks.org/learn/safety-updates> to determine which parks have re-opened, and which remain closed.

SCHOOLS

Governor DeSantis announced on Saturday, April 18, that all K-12 schools will continue distance learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year. For the full release: <http://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/florida-extends-distance-learning-through-remainder-of-academic-year.shtml>

PIGGLY WIGGLY PSJ is open 6am to 10pm, 7 days a week and is now offering ONLINE shopping. Visit www.DurensPigglyWiggly.com. Starting 4/2/20 at 1:30 pm, there will be a limit of 50 customers inside the store at a time. They are asking people to shop alone when possible to support social distancing in the store. **If you are over the age of 65 or have a suppressed immune system, Duren's Piggly Wiggly is dedicated to keeping you safe. If you do not feel comfortable coming into the store, can't use the online service, or DO NOT HAVE ANYONE THAT CAN SHOP FOR YOU, please call 850-229-8398, ask for Ron, and they will shop for you.

PHARMACY UPDATES

Effective immediately, all BUY RITE DRUG Pharmacies will be operating via drive-through only.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Sheriff's Office is no longer allowing visitors in the lobby. Office staff will remain at work and will be accessible by telephone and email.

LIBRARIES

Both Gulf County libraries are closed until further notice. Please call or visit NWRLS.com to place holds on library items which are available for curbside pick-up on Tuesdays 10-4 in Port St. Joe and Thursdays 10-4 in Wewahitchka.

ASCENSION SACRED HEART

Online urgent care is available through Ascension Online Care at a discounted \$20 with the code HOME. You can have a video visit with a doctor without leaving your home. Visit <http://ascension.org/onlinecare> to start your visit.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

In order to promote social distancing and discourage gatherings of 10 or more people, the health department is asking all clients to call the front desk at (850) 227-1276, before entering the lobby. We're here for you! Give us a call to discuss curbside pickup for birth control, medications, or emergency contraception.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has upended children's daily lives, resulting in added stress and uncertainty. Studies show that adversity during childhood, including adversity stemming from natural disasters, can have lasting impacts on children's social emotional health. Fortunately, families can take steps to support and protect children's emotional well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information visit the Nat'l Institute for Children's Health Quality site at [Article: Supporting Children's Health During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Here are some clear, concrete tips for physically distancing while staying emotionally and socially connected <https://preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources/>

The Germ that Wears a Crown: A Story About the Coronavirus: This is a story, coloring & activity book from FSU Center for Child Stress & Health to help children cope with COVID-19. The book teaches children about the virus, social distancing and how to express and manage strong emotions. Visit <http://fsustress.org/ebook.html> to download a free copy!

CLEANING AND DISINFECTANT SAFETY

The daily number of calls to poison centers increased sharply at the beginning of March 2020 for exposures to both cleaners and disinfectants. To reduce improper use and prevent unnecessary chemical exposures, users should always read and follow directions on the label, don't mix chemicals, wear protective gear, use in a well-ventilated area and store chemicals out of the reach of children. For more information you can contact the

Poison Control hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6916e1.htm?s_cid=mm6916e1_w

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I RECENTLY TRAVELED TO AN AREA WITH AN OUTBREAK OF COVID-19?

If you are returning from an area with an outbreak of COVID-19, the CDC is recommending you self-isolate for 14 days immediately upon returning from your travels, even if asymptomatic (no symptoms). Follow the CDC steps to help protect other people in your home and community: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath during those 14 days, contact your health care professional and mention your recent travel. Your provider will work with the health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from an impacted area, you should call a health care professional and mention your close contact and their recent travel.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECOVER FROM COVID-19?

Most individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Individuals will be asked to remain at home, except to get medical care. Stay in touch with your doctor if you feel worse or you think it is an emergency. People with COVID-19 who have stayed home can stop home isolation after meeting ALL of the following conditions:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers)
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved)
- At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

A test-based strategy is preferred for discontinuation of transmission-based precautions for patients who are hospitalized or severely immunocompromised or being transferred to a long-term care or assisted living facility.

STAY INFORMED:

To get the latest information, visit [FloridaHealth.gov](https://www.floridahealth.gov) and follow on Social Media:

Florida Department of Health: [Twitter @HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) -or- [Facebook Florida Department of Health \(DOH\)](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaDepartmentofHealth)

Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners: [Facebook Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners](https://www.facebook.com/GulfFranklinCountyCommunityHealthImprovementPartners)