

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

5/8/20 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: 161

Number of negative tests: 160

Number of positive tests: 1

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 April 30, 2020, Governor Ron Desantis signed Executive Order Number 20-112, Phase 1: Safe. Smart. Step-by-step. Plan for Florida's Recovery. This Order takes effect Monday, May 4, 2020 at 12:01 AM and lasts until the Governor issues a subsequent order. This extensive order covers updates on medical, vacations, travel, businesses, and activities.

To view the complete order, visit: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-112.pdf

To view frequently asked questions about Executive Order 20-112, visit <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/covid19/Exec%20Order%20-112%20FAQs.pdf>

For a more extensive list of essential services, visit https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-89.pdf

AIM FOR THE A!

Social Distancing is currently the most effective way to slow the spread of COVID-19. Check out this interactive [Social Distancing Scoreboard](#), updated daily, to measure and understand social distancing initiatives at the local level. Gulf is currently a C. Let's keep aiming for the A!

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](tel: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.

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

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>.

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.

CHD EXPANDED TESTING PLAN

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

The total tests were: Franklin (Carrabelle)- 102 and Gulf (Wewahitchka)- 130.

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

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>

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).

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.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND VACATION RENTALS EXTENDED

On April 29, the Governor signed [Executive Order 20-112](#), extending [Executive Order 20-87](#) (prohibition on vacation rentals) and [Executive Order 20-91](#) (essential services). This order went into effect May 4, 2020.

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

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](#)

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS

On March 17, Governor activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The application period is open and runs through May 8, 2020. Interested businesses should visit [FloridaDisasterLoan.org](https://www.floridadisasterloan.org) for more information.

LOCAL UPDATES:

Gulf County-The Gulf County BOCC agreed to allow EO- 20-05 to expire. 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 through May 4. 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. <https://www.floridastateparks.org/learn/safety-updates>

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. Next pickup: May 9th from 10:00 AM – 12 Noon. (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).

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.stml>

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.

A WORD FROM THE GULF COUNTY TDC:

The Gulf County TDC wants to thank each and every one of you for being patient. We understand that this has been unprecedented times for all of us and we are so proud to be partners in tourism with a resilient community like Gulf County. We will rebound from this together!

This afternoon the Governor announced the first phase of his Safe. Smart. Step By Step. plan to reopen the state of Florida. For the tourism and hospitality industry, beginning May 4th, restaurants and retail shops can be at 25% occupancy inside while practicing social distancing. Restaurants may utilize outside seating while practicing social distancing (minimum of 6 ft apart and groups of 10 or fewer) and not seating bar counter spaces.

The Vacation Rental ban is extended until May 4th pursuant to Executive Order 20-111 and the governor will revisit after the weekend. It currently extends through Phase 1 pursuant to Executive Order 20-112. We are working actively to get more information and dates for Phase 1. Bars, pubs and nightclubs remain closed under the order as well.

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 of 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)