

**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

**7/13/20 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 unduplicated COVID-19 tests so far: 2,403

Number of negative tests: 2,300

Number of positive tests: 99

*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](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov).

Follow the [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) website for the latest guidance on COVID-19 and check out [Floridahealth.gov](https://www.floridahealth.gov) to keep up with state-specific updates.

We get asked a lot about daily health screenings for employers. The CDC has [updated strategies and recommendations](#) for employers responding to COVID-19, including those seeking to resume normal or phased business operations. We created a youth screening tool and sent it out to summer youth programs. The questions were modified for the adult workforce. In addition to regular temperature checks, the follow questions can be asked to employees:

**Daily Health Questionnaire**

- ✦ Do you or anyone in your household have any of the following symptoms? (fever 100.4 or above, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, new loss of taste or smell)
- ✦ Have you or anyone in the household traveled outside of the country or to any highly affected areas in the United States in the past 14 days?
- ✦ Have you had direct contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with anyone who has tested positive with COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks?
- ✦ Is there anyone in your household under instructions to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19?

## **A MESSAGE FROM YOUR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

1. We are seeing community spread of COVID19 cases in Franklin and Gulf. In the beginning, many of the case investigations were travel-related or from close contact to a COVID19 positive individual outside of the county. However, we are seeing a significant climb in cases from close contacts to a positive case inside the county. And some COVID19 positive individuals have reported unknown exposure. We need to stop the spread NOW or we are going to continue to see spikes like around the state. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Visitors are also responsible for keeping our communities in good health. Follow CDC guidance at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>.
2. If you are identified as a positive case, the health department will work closely with you and help reach out to anyone you were in close contact with during your infection period. Why is this so important? We are trying to interrupt disease spread. Close contacts need to be able to quarantine so that the spread of the virus stops. Your personal information is kept completely confidential. When someone finds out they need to quarantine, all they hear is “you’ve been identified as a close contact to a positive case.” From there, we provide quarantine guidance to follow and help answer questions about the virus. Please be honest about the people you’ve been in close contact with. It can save lives.
3. If you have been a close contact (less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) to a positive case, you need to quarantine for 14 days. Even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you should stay home (quarantine) since symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Call your health care provider if you develop symptoms.
4. The Florida Department of Health in Franklin and Gulf are continuing to provide free COVID19 testing **by appointment**. The nasal swab test (that does not go to your brain) is used to test for active infection, not antibody.

## **TOP 3 COVID19 QUESTIONS:**

### **1. WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN A CONTACT TO A POSITIVE CASE?**

If you feel you’ve been a close contact to a positive case and would like to be tested, you can contact the local health department or your medical provider for testing. The recommendation is to quarantine for 14 days in your home, except to seek medical care. If symptoms develop during the 14-day period, contact your medical provider for follow up.

### **2. WHEN CAN YOU BE AROUND OTHERS AFTER YOU HAD OR LIKELY HAD COVID19?**

When you can be around others (end home isolation) depends on different factors for different situations. Find CDC’s recommendations for your situation using this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

### **3. HOW DO I CLEAN AND DISINFECTANT SAFELY AT HOME AND THE WORKPLACE?**

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. Follow CDC cleaning guidance using this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>

## **TESTING**

If you suspect you might have COVID19, please do not travel here. Please get a COVID19 test (nasal swab for active infection) in your community and know your results before you arrive. Stay home when you are sick and follow CDC guidelines. Visitors are also responsible for helping to keep our communities safe and healthy.

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 provider is going to evaluate you for possible causes and rule out other respiratory illnesses (ex. Flu) before testing for COVID-19.

### **COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPANDED TESTING PLAN**

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County will provide FREE COVID-19 testing. Symptoms are NOT required for testing. Please call (850) 227-1276 to make an appointment.

Free COVID19 testing POD at Honeyville Community Center on 7/27/20 from 10 AM – 4 PM Eastern / 9 AM – 3 PM Central.

### **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>

For a helpful guide, please see: [http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/\\_partners/action/antibody\\_testing.pdf](http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/action/antibody_testing.pdf)

### **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. 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](http://BigBendCBCGetHelp.org).

### **CLOTH FACE COVERS/MASK**

**If you or someone you love needs a cloth mask, please call 850-340-3016.**

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](http://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.

For a guide to frequently asked questions regarding Re-employment Assistance, visit [http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/claimant-faqs-\(new\)](http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/claimant-faqs-(new)).

For information regarding assistance with utilities, rent/mortgages, food pantries, and other local disaster assistance, visit <https://www.211.org/>

## **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**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the Month-WIG Community Center, 401 Peters St., Port St. Joe
- Farm Share distribution will be the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of month at 4:00pm. Drive-thru pick up on a first come, first serve.
- Second Harvest of the Big Bend: 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month from 9:30-11:30, 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.

## **GULF COUNTY PLAN FOR REOPENING SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS**

The Governor, Ron DeSantis, has lifted the Vacation Rental Ban in Gulf County. The BOCC submitted a plan to safely reopen rentals, which was APPROVED on May 19th. We are so thankful to the Governor and our BOCC for their swift action! In order to reopen safely and help you during this new travel environment, we have put together some tools to help plan your next adventure in Gulf County. We are excited to welcome you back! Let's not Jump In, Let's Wade in!

See county requirements at <https://www.visitgulf.com/getyourfeetwet/> and click on "Stay In the Know".

We ask that you join in to help familiarize yourself with the guidelines for [Gulf County Vacation Rentals](#) along with the State of Florida and the CDC. Vacation renters are following this CDC map to determine states with higher levels of exposure: <http://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html>. Click on "Rates" above the map to view the most updated information.

### **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>

### **GOVERNOR UPDATES:**

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

#### **PHASE 2: PLAN FOR FLORIDA'S RECOVERY**

On June 3, 2020 Gov. DeSantis announced Phase 2: Safe. Smart. Step-by-step Plan for Florida's Recovery.

To view the complete order, visit: [https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-139.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-139.pdf)

For the Florida Phase 2 Informational Flyer visit: <https://bit.ly/2AdBZlq>

Click [here](#) to see Gov. DeSantis presentation on Florida's Plan for Recovery.

#### **EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 20-166 – Extension of Executive Order 20-52**

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Gov. DeSantis extended the state of emergency declared in Executive Order 20-52 for 60 days.

[https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-166.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-166.pdf)

[https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-52.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-52.pdf)

#### **FLORIDA PANDEMIC EBT PROGRAM**

Governor Ron DeSantis announced federal approval of Florida's Pandemic EBT Program (P-EBT). The program will automatically issue benefits during the month of June to children who have temporarily lost access to free and reduced-price school meals during COVID-19-related school closures. To see the full article visit:

<https://www.flgov.com/2020/05/27/governor-ron-desantis-announces-floridas-participation-in-the-usdas-pandemic-ebt-program/>

#### **YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

On, Friday, May 22, 2020, Gov. DeSantis lifted the restrictions on youth sports and summer camps. This new order will go into effect immediately. Guidance for Organized Youth Activities:

<https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FL-Summer-Camp-Guidance-FAQs-5-21-20.pdf>

#### **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 June 30, the Governor issued [Executive Order 20-159](#), extending EO 20-94, providing targeted, temporary relief from certain mortgage foreclosures and evictions until August 1, 2020.

#### **LOCAL UPDATES:**

**Department of Business and Professional Regulation:** Effective immediately, DBPR is suspending on premises consumption of alcohol at bars statewide. [http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/os/documents/EO\\_2020-09.pdf](http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/os/documents/EO_2020-09.pdf)

#### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Starting May 28, 2020, the Franklin and Gulf County Health Departments will resume full clinic services. This includes annual physical exams, well woman exams, Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, and other routine appointments. Some services will continue to be done curbside or over the phone to decrease unnecessary exposure. Please call 850-227-1276 to schedule an appointment! **Please do not bring visitors with you to your appointments.**

**Florida Dept of Health issues Public Health Advisory:** It recommends all individuals should wear masks in any setting where social distancing is not possible unless a child is under the age of two, encourages elderly and vulnerable populations to limit interactions outside of the home, and urges all individuals to refrain from participating in gatherings of more than 50 people. For the full advisory visit: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/05/062020-1640-covid19.pr.html>

**PIGGLY WIGGLY PSJ** is open daily from 6am to 10pm and is now offering ONLINE shopping. Visit [www.DurensPigglyWiggly.com](http://www.DurensPigglyWiggly.com) for more information. We ask all customers to remain 6 feet apart. The deli is no longer self-serve but is open. Please try to shop one person per buggy.

#### **LIBRARIES**

Both Gulf County libraries are closed until further notice. Please call or visit [NWRLS.com](http://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. You can have a video visit with a doctor without leaving your home. Visit <http://ascension.org/onlinecare> to start your visit. Please note that Ascension is not a community COVID-19 testing site.

#### **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!

**STAY INFORMED:**

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

Florida Department of Health: [@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)