

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

07/13/2020 COVID-19 UPDATE:

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

Here are the Franklin County testing numbers as of 2:00pm today:

Number of unduplicated COVID-19 tests so far: **1,697**

Number of negative tests we have: **1,652**

Number of positive tests we have: **44**

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 Franklin County COVID-19 updates straight to your phone: text FranklinCV19 to 888777.

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

There is also a hotline available at 1 (866) 779-6121 or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

Follow the CDC.gov website for the latest guidance on COVID-19 and check out 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?

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County

2475 Garrison Avenue • Port St. Joe, Florida 32456
PHONE: 850-227-1276 • FAX 850-227-7587

Florida Department of Health in Franklin County

139-12th Street • Apalachicola, Florida 32320
PHONE: 850-653-2111 • FAX 850-653-1727

FloridaHealth.gov



Accredited Health Department
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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. Upcoming drive-thru testing locations are below:
GULF - Honeyville Community Center, 7/27/20 – 9am – 3pm CST
FRANKLIN - Franklin DOH (in front of Weems) COVID-19 testing – 7/14/20 – 8AM – 1PM

TOP 3 COVID-19 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 COVID-19, please do not travel here. Please get a COVID-19 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

The DOH-Franklin offers FREE COVID-19 testing every Monday – Friday from 8:30am – 11:00am & 1:00pm – 3:30pm. Testing is conducted at health department located at 139 12th Street, Apalachicola, FL. Symptoms are NOT required for testing. Please call (850) 653-2111 to make an appointment.

WEEMS OFFERS TESTING

Weems Medical Centers is conducting free COVID-19 testing for uninsured patients and insurance billed testing with zero copay for patients with coverage. An official provider order is required for testing.

Weems is also providing FREE COVID-19 antibody testing at both their East (Carrabelle) and West (Apalachicola) clinics. To make an appointment for testing, individuals should call the East Clinic at (850) 697-2345 or West Clinic at (850) 653-1525.

ANTIBODY TESTING

To learn about antibody testing, see http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/partners/action/antibody_testing.pdf or see visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html> for CDC information about antibody testing.

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, in partnership with New Directions Behavioral Health, is providing a free emotional support resource for all Floridians even if not covered by Florida Blue insurance. 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.

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>.

The Franklin County Emergency Management is collecting fabric for mask. If you would like to help our community by sewing face mask or donating fabric, please call the Franklin County Emergency Management office at (850) 653-4206.

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 <http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/apply-for-benefits> for a direct link to instructions on how to apply for Reemployment Assistance. Select the hyperlink to download and view the http://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/reemployment-assistance-center/new-individual-faq-includes-cares-act-final.pdf?sfvrsn=5f2547b0_14

If you can't apply by email you can pick up a paper application and submit it by mail. Below are the following pick up locations for paper applications in Franklin County. For more information you can contact: Career Source Gulf Coast at 850-653-4981. The application will be located in a box outside each building.

Apalachicola – CareerSource #1 Bay Ave Apalachicola, FL
Eastpoint – Ard's Service Station – 407 US Highway 98 Eastpoint, FL
Carrabelle City Hall – 206 Highway 98 E Carrabelle, FL

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/>

FRANKLIN/GULF/BAY COUNTIES:

Catholic Charities 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. Proof of need will be required: past due utility bill, proof of check stub from place of employment (before and after date affected).

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

For a list of youth feeding program sites near you dial 2-1-1 or visit <https://www.franklincountyschools.org/cms/lib/FL01803254/Centricity/Domain/36/03.18.2020%20Press%20Release%20UPDATED%20MEAL%20PICK%20UP%20LOCATIONS.pdf> for more details. **UPDATE: The Lanark Market, located at 2348 Hwy 98, Carrabelle, FL is also a food distribution site.**

FRANKLIN COUNTY PLAN FOR REOPENING SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS

Franklin County's plan for reopening includes a ban on renting to overseas travelers during the first phase, or to any person who lives in an area with substantial community spread of COVID-19. You can read the safety plan in its entirety online at www.Floridasforgottencoast.com.

We ask that you join in to help familiarize yourself with the guidelines for <https://www.franklincountyflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020.05.19-DBPR-SecretaryApproval-of-Franklin-County-VacationRental-Request.pdf> along with the State of Florida and the CDC. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/> to see which states have case rates higher than 500/100k.

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 this order, visit: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-139.pdf. To see Gov DeSantis presentation on Florida's plan for recovery visit <https://bit.ly/GovDeSantisPresentation>. For more information visit: <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/covid19/Phase%202.jpg>.

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

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

On, May 22, 2020, Governor DeSantis lifted the restrictions on youth sports and summer camps. This new order will go into effect immediately. More guidance from the Florida Department of Health will follow this update. To view frequently asked questions about the on the guidance for organized youth activities, visit <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FL-Summer-Camp-Guidance-FAQs-5-21-20.pdf>

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

On, Thursday, April 16, 2020 Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-104 which suspends the requirement that Floridians must recertify reemployment assistance status every two weeks.

FORECLOSURES & EVICTION RELIEF

On June 30, the Governor also issued order 20-159 (extending Executive Order 20-137), providing targeted, temporary relief from certain mortgage foreclosures and 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. To read the full order, please visit: http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/os/documents/EO_2020-09.pdf

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Franklin County Health Department has resumed full clinic services. This includes annual physical exams, well woman exams, Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, other routine appointments and COVID-19 testing. Some services will continue to be done curbside or over the phone to decrease unnecessary exposure. Please call (850) 653-2111 to schedule an appointment! Please do not bring visitors with you to your appointments.

Florida Department 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, encourage 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>

COUNTY CLERK & COURTHOUSE OFFICES

Offices within the main courthouse will remain open to the public for critical, essential services only. Please call (850) 653-8861 before you visit the courthouse to see how they may help you remotely. Visit www.franklincountyflorida.com or call the Planning and Building office at (850) 653-9783 for more details.

CITY GOVERNMENTS

The City of Carrabelle has issued a proclamation encouraging the use of facial coverings (mask) in all public buildings and establishments. As of Monday, July 13, 2020 the Carrabelle City Hall lobby and City buildings are CLOSED to public access until further notice. All non-essential meetings will be conducted by phone until further notice. The public is encouraged to continue to use the Dropbox at the front of City Hall for water & sewer payments. The Carrabelle City parks are now open however playgrounds and public restrooms will remain closed until further notice.

The City of Apalachicola has an emergency proclamation mandating [Facial Coverings](#) within local businesses and establishments. City offices have opened to in-person visits from 8:00a to 12:00p. Residents/customers must continue to call or email for business occurring after 12:00p. As always, the dropbox is still available for water & sewer bill payments. Call (850) 653-9319 for more details and (850) 653-6845 for after hours.

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. No insurance required. Visit <http://ascension.org/onlinecare> to start your visit.

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 <https://bit.ly/2JFXCM6>.

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!

STAYING 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)

Franklin County Florida Emergency Management: [Facebook Franklin County Florida Emergency Management](https://www.facebook.com/franklincountyfloridaemergencymanagement)

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