

**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

## Franklin and Gulf COVID – 19 Update – 8/6/21

For **Franklin County** updates straight to your phone: text **FranklinCV19** to 888777.

For **Gulf County** updates straight to your phone text **GULFCOVID** to 888777.

- 1. The best defense against COVID-19 is the vaccine.** COVID-19 vaccines are effective and are a critical tool to bring the pandemic under control. The vaccine helps protect you and the health of the broader community. If you still get COVID-19, the vaccine has been proven to reduce the severity of illness, hospitalization, and death. The vast majority of cases in Franklin and Gulf Counties are unvaccinated individuals.
2. Scientists continue to study how changes to the virus might affect how it spreads and just how sick people will get from it. Some variations allow the virus to spread more easily and might cause illness in some people even after they are fully vaccinated. Those variants must be monitored more carefully by scientists. If you still get COVID-19, evidence shows that the vaccine can reduce the severity of illness, hospitalization, and death.
3. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has revised the emergency use authorization for REGEN-COV monoclonal antibody therapy authorizing it for emergency use as **post**-exposure treatment for COVID-19. REGEN-COV is not authorized to prevent COVID-19 -- only after exposure to the virus. Treatment with REGEN-COV is not a substitute for vaccination against COVID-19. People should talk to their health care provider about whether the use of REGEN-COV for post-exposure prophylaxis is appropriate for them. To find out more, go to <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>

**What is going on with cases in our counties?** Let's look at July 2021 data:

The Florida Weekly COVID-19 data report can be found at the link: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>.

**Gulf:**

Week	Positive	Total tested	Percent positive*
7/2/2021	22	94	23.40%
7/9/2021	46	193	23.83%
7/16/2021	76	332	22.89%
7/23/2021	128	449	28.51%
7/30/2021	156	564	27.66%

**Franklin:**

Week	Positive	Total tested	Percent positive*
7/2/2021	3	47	6.38%
7/9/2021	15	76	19.74%
7/16/2021	26	133	19.55%
7/23/2021	73	250	29.20%
7/30/2021	111	356	31.18%

*\*How to understand percent positivity for new resident cases: residents who test positive divided by all residents tested during a time period.*

The vast majority of positive cases in both counties are unvaccinated individuals, between 15-50 years.

### How well are Franklin and Gulf doing with vaccination efforts?

Franklin: 45% (Franklin population babies and up: 12,295 | Age 12 & older with vaccine: 4,957)

Gulf: 44% (Gulf population babies and up: 14,829 | Age 12 & older with vaccine: 5,782)

State: 63%

### Looking for a COVID-19 vaccine in Franklin or Gulf? Your Healthcare system has you covered.

Your local Department of Health (DOH) and other medical providers continue to offer the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost. If you would like to schedule with the health department, please call DOH-Franklin at (850)653-2111 or DOH-Gulf at (850)227-1276. COVID-19 vaccines are also available through Weems Memorial Hospital, PanCare of Florida, Inc., North Florida Medical Center and local pharmacy locations, including CVS and Buyrite.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### "I know someone who got the vaccine and still got COVID-19. How can this be?"

Vaccine breakthrough cases **are expected**. COVID-19 vaccines are effective and are a critical tool to bring the pandemic under control. The vaccine is effective in reducing in the severity of the illness, hospitalizations, and death.

However, no vaccines are 100% effective at preventing illness in vaccinated people. The risk for COVID-19 infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated as long as there is continued community transmission of the virus. The best protection to greatly reduce the severity of illness, hospitalization and death is the vaccine.

### Are the vaccines safe?

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. <https://youtu.be/7bBmQaX2k4w>

COVID-19 vaccines were evaluated on tens of thousands of participants in clinical trials. The vaccines met the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency use authorization (EUA). Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines since they were authorized for emergency use by FDA. These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe.

Serious side effects that could cause a long-term health problem are extremely unlikely following any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccine monitoring has historically shown that side effects generally happen within six weeks of receiving a vaccine dose. For this reason, the FDA required each of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines to be studied for at least two months (eight weeks) after the final dose.

CDC continues to closely monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines. If scientists find a connection between a safety issue and a vaccine, FDA and the vaccine manufacturer will work toward an appropriate solution to address the specific safety concern.

### How was a vaccine rollout able to happen so fast?

One of the best explanations for the advancement of science starts with understanding something called the "human genome project". This is the ability to read the complete genetic blueprint of a human being. Researchers were able to successfully sequence and map all the genes, together known as the genome, of human beings.

The project involved over 200 labs in the U.S., 18 other countries, cost 3 billion dollars and took 13 years of work. The end result was the ability to decode the entire human genome, the order of chemical "bases" of your DNA. Today, scientists can do the exact same thing, in a shorter amount of time and less costly.

Now that scientists can decipher genetic coding very quickly, scientific efforts to tackle the virus (from testing, to tracking how the virus is mutating, to development of vaccines) can move faster. The virus genome was sequenced and shared publicly in January 2020, meaning researchers and manufacturers could begin developing vaccines against COVID-19 in record time. So, science is able to speed up thanks to the ability to decode genetics.

Genome sequencing can help to identify genetic patterns of a disease, as well as genetic factors that contribute to immunity or successful vaccine response. Genome sequencing also allows researchers to monitor how COVID-19 is mutating as it spreads from person to person and from place to place. The vaccines being rolled out are based on the version of the virus identified in late 2019. But as we know, the virus has since evolved, so scientists are understanding in real time the impact of identified mutations (variants). So far, researchers are providing evidence that vaccines still offer the best protection against infection and severe disease.

#### **Can receiving a COVID-19 vaccine cause you to be magnetic?**

**No.** Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine will not make you magnetic, including at the site of vaccination which is usually your arm. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain ingredients that can produce an electromagnetic field at the site of your injection. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metals.

#### **Do any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States shed or release any of their components?**

**No.** Vaccine shedding is the term used to describe the release or discharge of any of the vaccine components in or outside of the body. Vaccine shedding can only occur when a vaccine contains a weakened version of the virus. None of the vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. contain a live virus. mRNA and viral vector vaccines are the two types of currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines available.

#### **Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?**

**No.** COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. Both mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines deliver instructions (genetic material) to our cells to start building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. However, the material never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept.

#### **What do I do if I've tested positive for COVID-19?**

**Stay home unless you need medical care. You can be with others after:**

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

If you have had an exposure to a positive case and are not vaccinated, please follow your quarantine orders. Call the health department for any questions. Information about quarantine can be found at the following link :

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

#### **Have the symptoms of COVID-19 changed with new variants?**

Common symptoms include: headache, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. We often hear about “really bad headaches” or allergies. **These could be COVID-19 symptoms.**

For questions related to COVID-19, talk to your healthcare provider or contact the health department: Gulf: 850-227-1276, Franklin: 850-653-2111.