

**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

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## COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (March 3, 2020)

### Is there confirmation of COVID-19 in the state of Florida?

Yes. The Florida Department of Health (Department) has announced there are two positive cases of 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Florida. Both individuals remain in isolation at this time. Despite these cases in Florida, the overall immediate threat to the public remains low. There are no presumptive positive cases in Duval County.

### What do we know about the confirmed COVID-19 cases in Florida?

- The first patient is an adult Manatee county resident without travel history to countries identified for restricted travel by the CDC. This person did seek health care, is isolated and will continue to remain isolated until cleared by public health officials. The Florida Department of Health is working closely with the patient, their close contacts and health care providers to isolate and monitor persons who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and implement testing of anyone who may develop COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- The second patient is an adult resident of Hillsborough county with a history of travel to Italy. This person is isolated and will continue to remain isolated until cleared by public health officials.

### Did Governor DeSantis declare an executive order to direct a COVID-19 public health emergency?

Yes.

### What should the public know about a “State of Emergency?”

When a governor or local body declares a State of Emergency, public officials and workers are provided with the legal and financial means needed to deploy resources and respond to a potential crisis to protect lives and property. The State of Florida Executive Order Number 20-51 was implemented to establish a COVID-19 response protocol. Through the order, Governor DeSantis directed the State Health Officer and Surgeon General, Dr. Scott Rivkees, to declare a public health emergency in the State of Florida, pursuant to his authority in section 381.003 15, Florida Statutes. [https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-51.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-51.pdf)

### How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, including when an individual coughs or sneezes. These droplets may land on objects and surfaces. Other people may contract COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

### What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as many as 14 days following exposure. Most people recover from the

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COVID-19 without needing special treatment. The elderly and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

### **What should the public know about testing?**

The CDC and Health Departments use specific criteria, such as travel history, to determine if a patient should be tested for COVID-19. Patients should call ahead to their healthcare professional if they develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if they live in or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread. They should discuss recent travel and contact with their healthcare professional. Healthcare professionals will work with public health departments and CDC to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19. Concerned patients should not go directly to the health department or testing site.

### **What is the treatment for COVID-19?**

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

### **Is there currently a COVID-19 vaccination?**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

### **What countries are currently experiencing sustained community transmission?**

- China
- Iran
- Italy
- Japan
- South Korea

### **What is the government's response to COVID-19?**

As of February 24, 2020, a total of 1,336 CDC staff members have been involved in the COVID-19 response, including clinicians (i.e., physicians, nurses, and pharmacists), epidemiologists, veterinarians, laboratorians, communicators, data scientists and modelers, and coordination staff members.

Of these CDC staff members, 497 (37%) have been deployed to 39 locations in the United States and internationally, including CDC quarantine stations at U.S. ports of entry, state and local health departments, hospitals, and U.S. military bases that are housing quarantined persons, as well as WHO and ministries of health around the world.

CDC staff members are working with state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments and other public health authorities to assist with case identification, contact tracing, evaluation of persons under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19, and medical management of cases; and with academic partners to understand the virulence, risk for transmission, and other characteristics of this novel virus.

### **How is COVID-19 affecting travel?**

Several recent travel notices have been posted by CDC to inform travelers and clinicians about current health issues that could affect travelers' health.

- A Level 3 travel notice (avoid all nonessential travel) for China has been in effect since January 27.
- On February 19, Level 1 travel notices (practice usual precautions) for travelers to Hong Kong and Japan were posted.
- On February 22, the Level 1 travel notice for Japan was raised to Level 2 (practice enhanced precautions).
- A Level 2 travel notice was posted for South Korea on February 22, which was updated to Level 3 on February 24.
- Level 1 travel notices were posted for Iran and Italy on February 23, and then updated to Level 2 on February 24.

In addition, CDC has posted information for travelers regarding apparent community transmission in Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam, and recommendations for persons to reconsider cruise ship voyages in Asia.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

#### **What should the public know about airport screening?**

- As of February 23, a total of 46,016 air travelers had been screened at the 11 U.S. airports to which all flights from China are being directed.
- Since February 2, travelers to the United States who have been in China in the preceding 14 days have been limited to U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents and others as outlined in a presidential proclamation.
- Incoming passengers are screened for fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- Any travelers with signs or symptoms of illness receive a more comprehensive public health assessment.
- As of February 23, eleven travelers were referred to a hospital and tested for infection; one tested positive and was isolated and managed medically.
- Seventeen travelers were quarantined for 14 days because of travel from Hubei Province, China, an area that was designated as high risk for exposure to COVID-19; 13 of these 17 have completed their quarantine period.

#### **What should the public know about persons under investigation (PUIs)?**

Recognizing persons at risk for COVID-19 is a critical component of identifying cases and preventing further transmission. CDC has responded to clinical inquiries from public health officials, health care providers, and repatriation teams to evaluate and test PUIs in the United States for COVID-19 following CDC guidance.

#### **How can Jacksonville residents avoid the transmission of COVID-19?**

As a reminder, the Duval County Health Department always recommends everyday preventive actions to help impede the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick and avoiding contact with persons in poor health.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then disposing of the tissue.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The CDC does not recommend that asymptomatic, healthy people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.

**What about additional COVID-19 questions?**

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling 1-(866) 779-6121 or emailing [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov). The Call Center is available Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Please visit the Department's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at [www.FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19). This remains the best and most up-to-date resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

The CDC has a website with information related to COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.