

## **GULF COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATE:**

Your local health department is here to assist you with questions related to COVID-19 (new coronavirus). There are **NO** confirmed cases in Gulf or Franklin County.

Gulf and Franklin County Health Department Locations are OPEN and will remain open as staff continue to work on the COVID-19 response efforts.

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).

If you'd like to learn more about COVID-19 we encourage you to visit Information Is Beautiful COVID-19 #Coronavirus Data Pack <https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/covid-19-coronavirus-infographic-datapack/>. This site dedicated to helping you make clearer, more informed decisions about the world. All our visualizations are based on facts & data: constantly updated & revised.

## **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

## **VISITOR ADVISORY**

Visitors need to be paying attention to their own hometowns and maintaining situational awareness of community spread in these areas. With cases continuing to pop up in other counties, visitors have a responsibility to protect their own health and to protect the health of Gulf County residents. Following travel advisories, county ordinances, social distancing, good hygiene practices and respiratory care are all prevention tactics implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

## **GOVERNOR ISSUED EXECUTIVE ORDERS:**

### **RESTAURANTS**

On March 20, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-71, directing all restaurants and food establishments to suspend on-premises food and alcohol consumption for customers. The kitchens may continue to operate for take-out and delivery services for both food and alcohol, as long as alcohol is accompanied by food and is in a sealed container.

Gulf County Chamber of Commerce resource list: <http://business.gulfchamber.org/list/>

### **MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

On March 20, Executive Order 20-72 was issued prohibiting medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedures or surgeries.

### **GYMS AND FITNESS CENTERS**

Executive Order 20-71 directs the closure of gymnasiums and fitness centers within the State of Florida. This order does NOT apply to gyms or fitness centers which are in hotels with a capacity of 10 persons or less, are in a residential building, are inside fire or police stations or are located inside single-occupant office buildings.

## CLOSURES & RESTRICTIONS:

**Florida State Parks** will close to the public effective Monday, March 23, 2020.

**BEACHES:** An order issued March 20, states ALL GULF COUNTY BEACHES are TEMPORARILY closed for 7 days. [Emergency Order Closing Gulf Beaches](#)

**ALL Government Buildings** will be closed to the public effective at the close of business on March 18. You may reach any department by telephone or email.

## PHARMACY UPDATES

Effective immediately, all BUY RITE DRUG Pharmacies will be operating via drive-through only. Staff will do what they can to assist with store items through the drive-through.

## SCHOOLS

All schools including Early Head Start and Head Start will be closed until April 15. The district is working on an Instructional Continuity Plan for home-based learning until schools reopen. This plan will be implemented on Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. Beginning March 23rd, lunches will be served at Port St. Joe Elementary and Wewahitchka Elementary from 11:30 – 1:00 PM, local time. Lunches will also be delivered by school buses. Buses will run their regular morning pick-up routes on a PLUS- 5-hour adjustment for time. An example is, if your normal pick-up time is 7:30 AM, then add 5 hours... which means your lunch will arrive at your regular bus stop by 12:30 PM local time. Lunches will be delivered Monday through Friday. At this time lunches will be delivered through April 15, but can be adjusted longer, if necessary. Again, lunch program begins today! With questions. Please visit your schools website or [Gulfcoschools.com](http://Gulfcoschools.com)

## LIBRARIES

Port St. Joe County Library is closed until further notice. The Wi-Fi services will remain on 24/7 and is accessible from the parking lot.

## 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.

- To be prioritized for testing, patients must meet the **state's criteria**, which evaluates a combination of symptoms and risk factors. Their samples will be sent to the closest laboratory.
- If you don't meet priority criteria, you can discuss with your provider about possibly getting tested at a commercial laboratory (e.g. LabCorp or Quest).
- State lab results are generally available within 24-48 hours. Commercial labs can take three to four days. Turnaround time can for all be affected by demand.

## MASS GATHERINGS

Continue to follow information from the CDC on mass gatherings. CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings **recommends** that for the next 8 weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 10 people or more throughout the United States.

**SMALL BUSINESS LOANS**

On March 17, Governor DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The bridge loan program provides short-term, interest-free loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury from COVID-19. The application period is open and runs through May 8, 2020. Interested businesses should visit [FloridaDisasterLoan.org](https://FloridaDisasterLoan.org) for more information.

**STAY INFORMED:**

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

Florida Department of Health: Twitter [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) or Facebook [@FLDepartmentofHealth](https://www.facebook.com/FLDepartmentofHealth)

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