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COVID-19 CASES IN ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA, UPDATE #18

Continue Taking Measures To Prevent COVID-19 Transmission



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Pensacola, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) indicates that local efforts to test potentially-exposed individuals in Escambia County, Florida continues to identify new cases of COVID-19. As of 11 a.m. CT on Friday, April 24, the total number of Escambia County cases with a COVID-19 diagnosis is four hundred twenty-seven (427) individuals (three hundred seventy-nine (379) residents and forty-eight (48) non-residents). The total number of COVID-19 related deaths in Escambia County residents is eleven (11) individuals.

The COVID-19 case number is expected to change daily due to the return of results from ongoing testing. "These results reinforce how important it is for individuals to practice disease prevention methods and support the recent actions taken by state and local governments to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in Escambia County," said FDOH-Escambia Director, John J. Lanza, MD, PhD, MPH, FAAP, FHPS.

Health care providers in Escambia County, Florida are collaborating to make testing available to those for whom testing is indicated by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Contact tracing will be conducted for those individuals who have tested positive. Contact tracing is a frequently-used public health tool for tracking and preventing the spread of disease. Epidemiologists work to find everyone who has been in contact with the positive case. Persons identified to be at-risk through the contact tracing process are interviewed, evaluated, and educated on their risk factors and what they need to do next.

FDOH-Escambia encourages residents and visitors to take steps to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19. Everyone has an important role in preventing the spread of this virus.

Take Steps to Protect Against Spreading COVID-19

FDOH-Escambia encourages the practice of [social distancing](#) by avoiding large gatherings (more than 10 people) and staying at least six (6) feet away from others. Additionally, FDOH-Escambia advises following the [CDC recommendation](#) regarding the use of cloth face coverings. Wearing a cloth face covering in public settings, like grocery stores and pharmacies, is a voluntary recommendation that can help slow the spread of COVID-19. For proper use instructions and more information, visit the [CDC website](#).

Follow these steps in all situations, even when you feel perfectly healthy:

- Avoid close contact with others, such as hugging, kissing, or shaking hands;
- Avoid large gatherings (more than 10 people) and stay at least six (6) feet away from others;

- Avoid unnecessary travel, especially international travel and cruise travel;
- Avoid being around anyone who is sick or who may have a weak immune system;
- Move away from people before coughing or sneezing;
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue then throw it away;
- Wash your hands often, especially after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose;
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys and doorknobs.

If you are mildly ill, follow these tips to help prevent spreading it to other people:

- Do not go to the emergency department if you are only a little sick. The emergency department should be used for people who are very sick. You should not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill. The CDC has guidance on what to do if you are sick from a mild viral illness: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/takingcare.htm> and <https://www.cdc.gov/features/rhinoviruses/index.html>
- Stay at home while you are sick and keep children out of school or daycare while they are sick.

Screen Yourself and Call First

If you become sick, call, do not visit, your health care provider and tell them about your symptoms and your travel history or exposure to a COVID-19 patient. It is important to call ahead before visiting your health care provider. Offices must take proper steps to avoid further spread of COVID-19 when a concerned patient arrives for a medical evaluation. If you do not have a health care provider or health insurance, call, do not visit, Community Health Northwest Florida at 850-436-4630 or other community walk-in care locations, and tell them about your symptoms and your travel history or exposure to a COVID-19 patient. They will determine if you meet the criteria for testing. Assistance with the steps outlined above may be obtained by calling our coronavirus information line at 850-595-6500, option 6.

Online Screening

An [online assessment screening for COVID-19](#) is available to determine if further diagnostic testing is needed. Anyone who is concerned about a possible exposure to COVID-19 or is exhibiting symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath can complete an initial online assessment screening using a smartphone, tablet or computer. The online screening tool helps keep patients safe and reduces the risk of possible spread of the virus by limiting visits to a facility or clinic for the initial assessment.

The screening can also be accessed by texting “Screen” to 850-318-3080. Once the online screening is completed, options for further preventative measures or screenings, if indicated, are offered. Those whose assessments indicate the need for further testing will receive a phone call to schedule an appointment.

Drive-through COVID-19 testing is available in Escambia County.

Drive through testing is available at three locations.

- **IMPORTANT:** All patients are required to be screened before arriving at the drive-through testing centers by calling the local COVID-19 Screening Call Center at 850-746-2684.
- The screening call center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The call center staff will assist in helping find the testing center that best fits the needs of each person needing a COVID-19 test.

- The hours of operation for the drive-through testing centers for COVID-19 are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Where to find COVID-19 informational resources

The Florida Department of Health (Department) works continuously with all our community partners to ensure that everyone is prepared in the eventuality of infectious disease spread. Please visit the Department's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>. The webpage remains the best and most up-to-date resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

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. **The Call Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

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

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About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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