

COVID-19 FAQs

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COVID-19 Basics

What is a novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

How does the virus spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in many affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

What are the symptoms and signs of COVID-19?

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Patients with COVID-19 have reported mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

What is antibody testing?

Antibody testing checks a sample of a person’s blood to look for antibodies to the virus that causes COVID-19. When someone gets COVID-19, their body usually makes antibodies. However, it typically takes one to three weeks to develop these antibodies. A positive result from this test may mean that person was previously infected with the virus. Talk to your healthcare provider about what your antibody test result means. We do not know yet if having antibodies to the virus that causes COVID-19 can protect someone from getting infected again or, if they do, how long this protection might last. Scientists are conducting research to answer those questions.

Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

What are the treatments for COVID-19?

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be spread through food, including restaurant take out, refrigerated or frozen packaged food?

Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Before preparing or eating food it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds for general food safety. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, like a packaging container, that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging.

How to Protect Yourself

How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

Practice social distancing, wear a face cover or mask in public, clean your hands frequently, avoid touching your eyes, nose, & mouth, cover coughs and sneezes, and clean and disinfect “high-touch” surfaces.

What do I do if I am sick?

If you are sick it is important to stay home, take care of yourself while monitoring your symptoms, stay in touch with your doctor, and avoid public transportation. Call ahead before visiting your doctor. If you are feeling sick with fever, trouble breathing, or a cough call your primary care doctor or DOH-Collier screening line at (239) 252-6220.

What should I do if someone in my house gets sick with COVID-19?

Most people who get COVID-19 will be able to recover at home. CDC has directions for people who are recovering at home and their caregivers, including:

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Use a separate room and bathroom for sick household members (if possible).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- 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.
- Provide your sick household member with clean disposable facemasks to wear at home, if available, to help prevent spreading COVID-19 to others.
- Clean the sick room and bathroom, as needed, to avoid unnecessary contact with the sick person.
- Avoid sharing personal items like utensils, food, and drinks.

Should I use soap and water or a hand sanitizer to protect against COVID-19?

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Is it okay to have or go to large events?

According to Executive order 20-112 starting May 4, all persons in Florida should avoid congregating in large groups. Groups of greater than 10 are not permitted to congregate in any public space that does not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing.

Per the Safe. Smart. Step-by Step. Plan for Florida's Recovery all individuals should continue to maximize physical distance from others in public, particularly in enclosed environments. Individuals should avoid socializing in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate social distancing of at least 6 feet.

Why is social distancing important when it comes to COVID-19?

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth, which may contain the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the coronavirus if the person coughing has the disease.

What disinfectants work against COVID-19?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a list of EPA-registered disinfectant products that have qualified for use against SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The list of disinfectant products can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.

Can I travel to visit family or friends?

Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. Before you travel, learn if coronavirus is spreading in your local area or in any of the places you are going. Traveling to visit family may be especially dangerous if you or your loved ones are more likely to get very ill from COVID-19. People at higher risk for severe illness need to take extra precautions.

Am I at risk for COVID-19 from mail, packages, or products?

There is still a lot that is unknown about COVID-19 and how it spreads. Coronaviruses are thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Although the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products or packaging. However, it may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Pets

Can I get COVID-19 from my pets or other animals?

At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. A small number of pets have been reported to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after contact with people with COVID-19.

Pets have other types of coronaviruses that can make them sick, like canine and feline coronaviruses. These other coronaviruses cannot infect people and are not related to the current COVID-19 outbreak.

However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to practice healthy habits around pets and other animals, such as washing your hands and maintaining good hygiene.

Do I need to get my pet tested for COVID-19?

No. At this time, routine testing of animals for COVID-19 is not recommended.

Can I walk my dog?

Walking a dog is important for both animal and human health and well-being. Walk dogs on a leash, maintaining at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people and animals, do not gather in groups, and stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings. Do not go to dog parks or public places where a large number of people and dogs gather. To help maintain social distancing, do not let other people pet your dog when you are out for a walk.

Face Coverings/ Face Masks

Why is it recommended to wear a face covering or a face mask?

You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The face cover or face mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Cover your mouth and nose with a face cover or a face mask when around others and out in public, such as the grocery store.

Who should not wear a face covering or a face mask?

Don't place a face cover or a face mask on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or any who is unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Should children wear a face covering or a face mask?

CDC recommends that everyone 2 years and older wear a face covering or a face mask that covers their nose and mouth when they are out in the community. Face coverings or a face mask should NOT be put on babies or children younger than 2 because of the danger of suffocation. Children younger than 2 years of age are listed as an exception as well as anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

Where can I get a face covering or a face mask?

Face coverings and face masks are available online or at certain stores. You can make your own face covering by using a t-shirt, bandana, or by sewing one together. To find other ways to make a face covering visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>

Do I have to wash my face covering?

Face coverings should be washed after each use. It is important to always remove face coverings and face masks correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering.

How do I take off my face cover?

Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops. Then handle only by the ear loops or ties. Fold outside corners together. After removing and folding it, place covering in the washing machine. Don't forget to wash your hands with soap and water after.

Contact Tracing

What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing is a disease control measure. Public health professionals work with patients to develop a list of everyone they have been in close contact with during a certain period. The staff will then contact those people to let them know about their possible exposure so that they can take proper precautions.

How is contact tracing conducted?

When a person tests positive for a disease or condition, a public health case investigator will work with the patient to create a list of people they've been in contact with during a given time frame. The contact tracing expert then contacts each of those people so that they can take appropriate precautions (getting tested, self-isolation, monitor for symptoms, etc.) and, in turn, create a list of people they've been in contact with as necessary. By using this strategy, public health professionals can get ahead of infectious diseases and prevent further spread.

Who does contact tracing?

Contact tracing is done by specially trained public health professionals. In general, these trained staff study patterns and causes of diseases in humans. Public health professionals tasked with contact tracing are experts in protecting client confidentiality, counseling, cultural competency, and more.

What is the purpose of contact tracing?

Many communicable diseases, including COVID-19, can be spread by people who do not appear to be sick. Since these people feel well, they are unlikely to get tested and may not know they are carrying a virus. Contact tracing can help public health officials learn who these asymptomatic carriers are so they can be informed about appropriate prevention measures, to include testing and self-isolation. This helps keep disease at bay.

Collier County COVID-19

Who do I call for questions about COVID-19?

Call the Florida Department of Health's 24/7 call center at (866) 779-6121.

Who do I call if I am experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

If you think you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and you live in Collier County, please contact (239) 252-6220, 7 days a week from 9 am-5 pm.

How many cases do we have of COVID-19 in Collier County?

Visit the COVID-19 dashboard that can be found on [FLHealth.gov/COVID-19](https://flhealth.gov/COVID-19). This dashboard is updated daily and includes a breakdown of cases by zip code.

Who do I contact if I have specific questions about an executive order?

If you have specific questions regarding specific mandates/executive orders or your neighborhood, please email the general information box at Info.DOHCollier@flhealth.gov

*This email is monitored M-F 8 am- 5 pm.

Walk-up Testing in Collier County

If I was tested at North Collier Regional Park or South Regional Library how do I get my results?

To view your results, register for the patient portal at patient.labcorp.com, or download the LabCorp Patient mobile app, or call the LabCorp contact center at 1-800-877-5227.

What did I need to bring when I got tested for COVID-19?

Yourself! You will be asked to provide your name, address, and contact phone. You will also need to wear a mask or face covering. If you do not have a mask, you will be provided one.

How many tests were available per day?

We were able to test up to 750 people per day at these testing sites.

Was this testing for antibodies?

No. This testing was for the COVID-19 virus.

Was there a cost?

No. There was no cost for the test.

Did I have to have symptoms of COVID-19 to get tested at these sites?

No. You could get tested even without symptoms.

Did I need a note or referral from my doctor?

No. You did not need a note or referral from a doctor.

Is there testing available in Immokalee?

COVID-19 virus testing will be available every Sunday from 12 pm–6 pm or until testing capacity is reached in Immokalee. Testing will be located at the Florida Department of Health Immokalee site 419 N 1st Street. Pop-up COVID-19 testing sites will also be available two days out of the week in Immokalee. Testing sites are to be determined.

Resources

Where can I get more information about COVID-19?

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

<https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus>

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/COVID-19>

<https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/home>

Florida Department of Health

COVID-19 Screening line – (239) 252-6220 (7 days a week, 9am-5pm)

Florida Department of Health in Collier County general information box- Info.DOHCollier@flhealth.gov

*This email is monitored Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm

collier.floridahealth.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Disaster Distress Helpline

- Phone: 1-800-985-5990
- Text: "TalkWithUs" to 66746

National Helpline

- Phone: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)