

**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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**March 27, 2020**

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN SUWANNEE COUNTY PROVIDES COVID-19 UPDATE, ANNOUNCES FIRST CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE**

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**Live Oak, Fla.**—Suwannee County received confirmation of its first positive case of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, today. The person ill with the virus is a 51-year-old female.

The Florida Department of Health in Suwannee County (DOH-Suwannee) is now conducting its contact investigation and working on identifying and notifying individuals who will need to self-monitor for symptoms for a 14-day period. Contact investigations are a critical way for staff epidemiologists to track and prevent the spread of disease.

As Suwannee County sees its first confirmed case, DOH-Suwannee Administrator Mr. Kerry S. Waldron emphasized the importance of mitigation practices in preventing the spread of the virus.

“If we work together using smart mitigation practices, we can reduce COVID-19’s impact on our community,” Waldron said. “We must practice social distancing, stay home when sick, frequently wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, cover coughs and sneezes, and follow CDC prevention guidelines to stop the spread of the virus.”

Social distancing measures that have included the closure of schools and recommendations to cancel gatherings of more than 10 individuals are two of the ways that health officials hope to prevent the speed of the virus’ spread in the state. Preventing the speed and spread of the virus would “flatten the curve” and prevent the overwhelming of our health care systems.

DOH-Suwannee has been monitoring COVID-19 since January and been in contact with Suwannee County Emergency Management and medical providers to prepare response activities in the event we were to see cases in Suwannee.

### **COVID-19 symptoms and treatment**

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The symptoms of COVID-19 can mirror illnesses such as influenza. Patients with COVID-19 typically display symptoms such as fever (100.4°F or higher), cough, and/or shortness of breath within 2 to 14 days of exposure to the virus. Approximately 80% of those affected with COVID-19 report mild to moderate illness and experience a complete recovery. Some experience more severe illness. People who are more vulnerable to the illness include individuals who are over age 65 with underlying health conditions, immunocompromised, ill or have underlying chronic health conditions, such as heart disease or diabetes.

Many cases of COVID-19 can be managed at home by treating symptoms, and this is encouraged. However, if you develop worsening symptoms, such as shortness of breath, chest pain, or inability to drink fluids, contact 911 and advise them of your symptoms as you may need treatment at a hospital.

### **COVID-19 overview, symptoms, and general prevention**

COVID-19 is a new type of coronavirus; coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals. Other coronaviruses include the common cold and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). COVID-19 is believed to have emerged from an animal source and is now capable of spreading from person-to-person. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

### **For more guidance**

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 visit <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

### **Local Call Center Available 24/7**

Individuals can call the statewide COVID-19 hotline 24/7 at 866-779-6121 or [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov). Health care providers should continue to call DOH epidemiology staff if they have questions regarding testing.

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, 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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