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The Coastal Health District of Georgia serves the counties of Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long & McIntosh

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Frequently Asked Questions & Answers about COVID-19

Updated 3.21.20

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information is likely to change.

Cases and Transmission

Q: Do we have any cases here?

A: We currently have 7 lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19; 2 in Glynn County, 1 in Effingham County, and 4 in Chatham County. We will update the case count every day at noon and 7 p.m. on our website. Also, the Georgia Department of Public Health updates its website, [dph.ga.gov \(https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-daily-status-report\)](https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-daily-status-report), every day at noon and 7 p.m. with a map of lab-confirmed cases around the state of Georgia.

Q: What happens now that we have started getting cases?

A: We knew it was a matter of “when” and not “if.” Even if you are in a county with no confirmed case, don’t assume the virus is not present. Because testing has been limited,

Quick Links

- [Women's Services](http://www.gachd.org/programs-services/womens-services/)
- [Restaurant Inspections](http://dph.georgia.gov/environmental-health-inspections)
- [Job/Internship Opportunities](#)

we may not have an accurate picture of the current level of infection across our area. That's why we must all take measures to protect ourselves and others from spreading germs.

That means:

- Washing hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water. If you don't have soap, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Regularly clean common surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, computer keyboards, and light switches.
- Cover your cough with a tissue and throw the tissue away or cough into the crook of your elbow.
- Instead of shaking hands, consider a fist or elbow bump.
- Don't share cups or eating utensils.

Q: Is there community transmission?

A: There is moderate community transmission in many parts of Georgia.

Testing

Q: Who can get tested and where?

A: Right now, all tests for COVID-19 must be ordered by a physician. Local health departments cannot evaluate, test, or treat COVID-19.

Q: Why can't everyone get tested?

A: We understand that people want to be tested but the reality is that we do not yet have the capacity for widespread community testing or screening. Fortunately, the vast majority of people infected with COVID19 are ONLY mildly or moderately ill with "cold-like" symptoms and can safely recover at home with self-isolation and symptomatic treatment. Strategies to reduce COVID-19 in communities are focused on slowing the transmission of disease and in particular to protect:

- Individuals at increased risk for severe illness, including older adults and persons of any age with underlying health conditions.
- The healthcare and critical infrastructure work forces.

For those reasons, priority for testing is given to:

- Hospitalized patients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19.
- Other symptomatic individuals such as older adults and individuals with chronic medical conditions or are immunocompromised.
- Any persons who, within 14 days of showing symptoms, had close contact with a suspect or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient, or who have a history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days of their symptom onset.
- Healthcare professionals who care for patients with COVID-19.

Q: I've heard there are drive-through testing sites. Is that true?

A: Drive-through specimen collection centers are being established in health districts around the state, including the Coastal Health District, to collect specimens from mildly ill people who do not require medical care or hospitalization, but who DO fall into one of the other prioritized groups including:

(http://gachd.org/about/employment_oppo

Information for Health Professionals

([\[services/information_for_health_profess_1/\]\(http://gachd.org/programs-services/information_for_health_profess_1/\)](http://gachd.org/programs-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Birth and Death Certificates

([\[services/vital_records/\]\(http://gachd.org/programs-services/vital_records/\)\)](http://gachd.org/programs-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

([\[services/women_infants_and_childrens_nu\]\(http://gachd.org/programs-services/women_infants_and_childrens_nu\)](http://gachd.org/programs-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Immunizations & Vaccinations

([\[services/immunizationsvaccinations/\]\(http://gachd.org/programs-services/immunizationsvaccinations/\)\)](http://gachd.org/programs-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

District News



[New Process for Announcing Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in Coastal Health District](https://www.gachd.org/r-process-for-announcing-confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-in-coastal-health-district/)
(<https://www.gachd.org/r-process-for-announcing-confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-in-coastal-health-district/>)



[Second Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Chatham County](https://www.gachd.org/s-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-chatham-county/)
(<https://www.gachd.org/s-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-chatham-county/>)



[Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Chatham County](https://www.gachd.org/c-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-chatham-county/)
([https://www.gachd.org/c](https://www.gachd.org/c-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-chatham-county/)

- Healthcare workers and other first responders who are critical for caring for our communities during this epidemic, and who frequently interact with vulnerable populations.
- People working with and caring for vulnerable populations, such as long-term care facility staff.
- People living in congregate settings where the disease can spread rapidly.

These sites are only for high risk individuals who have been pre-approved for testing and not for the general public. Only individuals who have been evaluated by a healthcare provider and assigned a Person Under Investigation (PUI) number will be referred to these drive-through sites.

Q: What if I have symptoms or think I have COVID-19 but don't fall into a priority testing category?

A: If you have symptoms including fever, cough, or shortness of breath, then you should stay home and away from others. You shouldn't go outside your home except to get medical care but – and this is important – don't seek medical care without calling the healthcare provider first. That will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

If you have symptoms:

- Stay in a specific room of the house and use a separate bathroom from others if you can.
- Don't share personal items such as dishes, eating utensils, or bedding with others in your home and thoroughly wash those items with soap and water after they've been used.
- Use household cleaners to clean high-touch surfaces and areas – some examples include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, phones, and keyboards.
- While we don't recommend facemasks for everyone, people who are sick should wear one when around other people. If the person who is sick can't wear a facemask because, say, they have trouble breathing, then anyone who is in the room with the sick person should wear a facemask.
- And of course, the same basic hygiene recommendations still apply: Wash your hands, sneeze or cough into a tissue and throw the tissue away, regularly clean common surfaces in the home, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Keep in mind that there is no treatment for COVID-19 and people who are mildly ill may be able to isolate and care for themselves at home. Even with severe cases, the absence of a test does not delay treatment. Doctors can provide supportive care to ease symptoms, and this is done with or without a test.

If your symptoms worsen and you experience difficulty breathing, seek medical care right away.

Q: How many people are being tested?

A: Updates on the number of completed tests in Georgia can be found at dph.ga.gov (<https://dph.georgia.gov/>).

[case-of-covid-19-in-chatham-county/](#)



[Coastal Health District Opens Second Specimen Collection Site](https://www.gachd.org/health-district-opens-second-specimen-collection-site/)
[\(https://www.gachd.org/health-district-opens-second-specimen-collection-site/\)](https://www.gachd.org/health-district-opens-second-specimen-collection-site/)



[Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Effingham County](https://www.gachd.org/case-of-covid-19-in-effingham-county/)
[\(https://www.gachd.org/case-of-covid-19-in-effingham-county/\)](https://www.gachd.org/case-of-covid-19-in-effingham-county/)

Upcoming Events

[Free Mammograms in Chatham County](https://www.gachd.org/event/mammograms-in-chatham-county-2/)
[\(https://www.gachd.org/event/mammograms-in-chatham-county-2/\)](https://www.gachd.org/event/mammograms-in-chatham-county-2/)

March 31 @ 8:30 am - 3:00 pm

[View All Events](https://www.gachd.org/events/)
[\(https://www.gachd.org/events/\)](https://www.gachd.org/events/)

Q: How will we know if people in our area are positive for COVID-19?

A: Laboratories must report positive tests to public health. When we are notified that we have lab-confirmed positive cases, we will let the public know through this website, media partners, social media outlets, and through other community partners such as Emergency Management Agencies.

Q: Are there home testing kits available?

A: Not at this time. But again, if you have mild symptoms you should isolate yourself from others in your household and care for yourself at home. If your symptoms become worse, call a healthcare provider.

Social Distancing

Q: What is social distancing?

A: Social distancing means minimizing contact with people. It also means that if you are near someone in public, try to stay at least 6 feet away. The less contact people have with one another means the less opportunity for the virus to spread. Slowing the spread of the virus means we can keep our healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed.

Precautions

Q: Should I wear a facemask?

A: If you are sick, you should wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Event Cancellations

Q: Should I go to my house of worship?

A: Right now, federal and state guidelines recommend staying home if possible and limiting time in public places as precautions associated with social distancing. The more we use social distancing techniques, the more we reduce the risk of the virus spreading. This is especially important for older people and those with underlying health conditions who are most vulnerable to the virus. We understand that this is a time when faith communities need to stay connected so we certainly support any efforts to provide the opportunity to worship online or electronically.

Q: Should I go out at all?

A: We strongly encourage everyone to be both personally and socially responsible. Right now, federal authorities:

- Encourage those who can work from home to do so
- Encourage everyone to avoid unnecessarily gathering in groups of 10 or more people
- Encourage everyone to avoid discretionary travel, shopping trips, and social visits

Recommendations also encourage the use of drive-through, pick-up, or delivery options when considering food from sources outside the home.

We absolutely encourage all those measures at a minimum and fully support more stringent measures of social distancing.

Transmission

Q: Can COVID-19 be spread through water?

A: Click here to find out more about drinking water, recreational water, wastewater and COVID-19:

[COVID-19 and Water Transmission \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html)

More Information

Q: I still have questions. Where can I get more information?

A: There is a state of Georgia hotline people can call with questions or if they think they may have been exposed: [1-844-442-2681 \(tel:18444422681\)](tel:18444422681).

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(https://www.cdc.gov/\)](https://www.cdc.gov/) website has the most current and accurate information on COVID-19.

Again, if you believe you're experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to the novel coronavirus, please contact your primary care doctor, an urgent care clinic, or your local federally qualified healthcare center. Please do not show up to an emergency room or healthcare facility unannounced.

Providers: Healthcare providers who suspect COVID-19 in a patient should immediately contact the Georgia Department of Public Health by calling [1-866-PUB-HLTH \(782-4584\)](tel:18667824584). (tel:18667824584)

Additional Links and Resources

[Beach Water Advisories](https://coastalgadnr.org/HealthyBeaches)

(<https://coastalgadnr.org/HealthyBeaches>)

[Human Trafficking Notice](https://gbi.georgia.gov/documents/human-trafficking-notice)

(<https://gbi.georgia.gov/documents/human-trafficking-notice>)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(http://www.cdc.gov\)](http://www.cdc.gov)

[Georgia Department of Public Health \(http://dph.georgia.gov\)](http://dph.georgia.gov)

[World Health Organization \(http://www.who.int/en/\)](http://www.who.int/en/)

[U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(http://www.fda.gov/\)](http://www.fda.gov/)

[National Institutes of Health \(http://www.nih.gov/\)](http://www.nih.gov/)

[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(http://www.hhs.gov/\)](http://www.hhs.gov/)

[News & Events](https://www.gachd.org/news-events/)

(<https://www.gachd.org/news-events/>)

[Emergency Prep](https://www.gachd.org/emergency-prep/)

(<https://www.gachd.org/emergency-prep/>)

[Environmental Health](https://www.gachd.org/programs-services/environmental-health-2/)

(<https://www.gachd.org/programs-services/environmental-health-2/>)

[Programs & Services](https://www.gachd.org/programs-services/)

(<https://www.gachd.org/programs-services/>)

Employee Login
(<http://gachd.com/infonet>)

[Health Departments](https://www.gachd.org/counties/)

(<https://www.gachd.org/counties/>)

[Environmental Health Offices](https://www.gachd.org/programs-services/environmental-health-2/environmental_health_offices/)

(https://www.gachd.org/programs-services/environmental-health-2/environmental_health_offices/)

[Administrative Offices](https://www.gachd.org/about/)

(<https://www.gachd.org/about/>)

[Public health websites](http://www.heideldesign.com/web/public-health-website-design/)

(<http://www.heideldesign.com/web/public-health-website-design/>) by Heideldesign