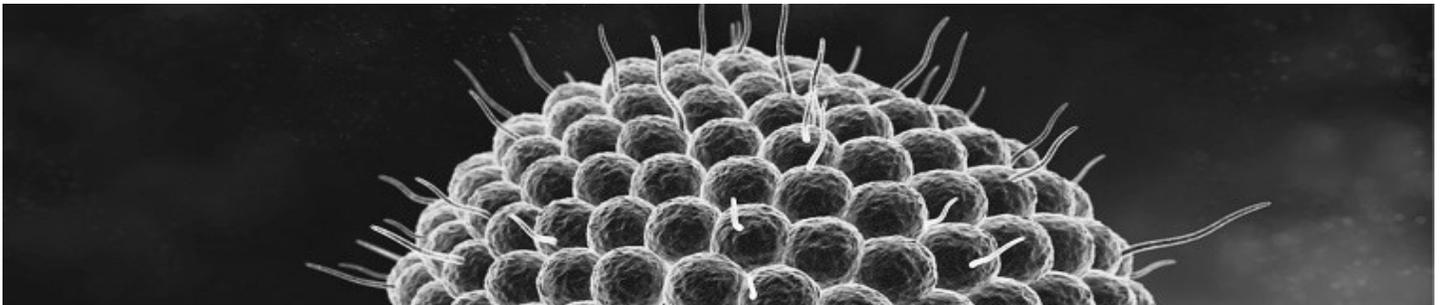




# EPI WATCH

Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter



205 Dr. MLK Jr. Street N.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
(727) 824-6900

**Director**  
Ulyee Choe, DO

**Editors**  
JoAnne Lamb, MPH  
JoAnne.Lamb@FLHealth.gov

Eliza Carroll  
Eliza.Carroll@FLHealth.gov

**Division of Disease Control  
and Health Protection**

## Disease Reporting

To report diseases and clusters  
of illness:

Phone: (727) 824-6932  
Fax: (727) 484-3865  
(excluding HIV/AIDS)

To report HIV/AIDS by mail:  
Surveillance Room 3-138  
205 Dr. MLK Jr St. N  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

## Varicella -Zoster Virus

Varicella-zoster virus (VZV), pictured above, is a highly-infectious virus that causes chickenpox and shingles. Chickenpox can cause a itchy, blister-like rash as well as fever, fatigue, loss of appetite and headache. In 2019, 985 chickenpox cases were reported in Florida, the highest count in 5 years.<sup>1</sup>

In most persons, chickenpox is mild, however, in infants under 12 months, pregnant women, and persons with a weakened immune system the disease may be serious.

Getting vaccinated against the virus is more than 90% effective at preventing chickenpox and is proven to lessen symptoms in persons who develop the disease.<sup>2</sup>

In **children**, the CDC recommends:

- First dose: 12 months through 15 months of age
- Second dose: 4 through 6 years of age

**Older children and adults** also need 2 doses of varicella vaccine if they have not received the vaccine or had the disease.<sup>3</sup> For persons exposed to varicella who cannot receive the varicella vaccine, Varicella-zoster immune globulin is recommended to prevent or lessen the disease severity.<sup>4</sup>

Healthcare providers are recommended to follow standard precautions plus airborne precautions when in contact with persons with Varicella. Additionally, Chickenpox is a reportable disease in Florida and should be reported by the next business day to your County Health Department.

**For guidance on collecting specimens please review the CDC's [Varicella: Collecting Specimens](#) website.**

1 FDOH. (2020). Varicella Summary: 2019 yearly Summary. Retrieved from [http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vaccine-preventable-disease/varicella/\\_documents/2019-varicella-yearly-summary.pdf](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vaccine-preventable-disease/varicella/_documents/2019-varicella-yearly-summary.pdf)

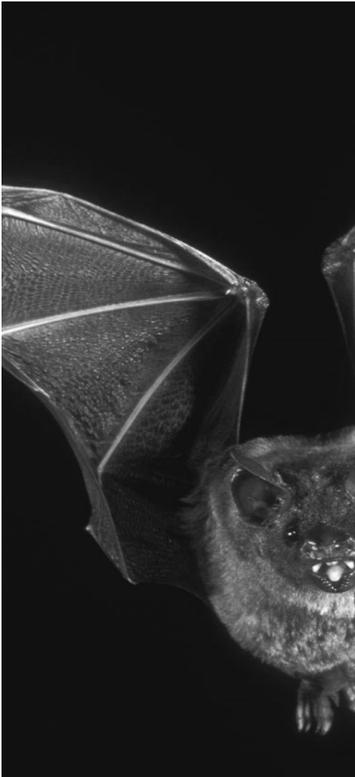
2 CDC. (2020). Varicella vaccine Recommendations. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/varicella/hcp/recommendations.html>

3 Centers for Disease Control and Health Protection. (2020). Vaccination. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/chickenpox/vaccination.html>

4 CDC. (2020). High risk for Severe varicella. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/chickenpox/hcp/index.html>

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The Florida Department of Health continues to monitor and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please visit the DOH webpage <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/> for timely updates.



## Bat Maternity Season

Florida is home to 13 species of bats including the endangered Florida Bonneted Bat. Bats are an important part of the Florida ecosystem as they play a vital role in controlling insect populations.

Bat Maternity seasons starts April 15 in Florida. In this time, bats gather to give birth and raise their young. Often bats find cracks in chimneys or holes in sidings of homes to roost. There they raise their vulnerable flightless young. In Florida, it is illegal to harm or kill bats so it is best to ensure that your home is inspected to prevent having to remove the young.

Residents and visitors to Florida can help bats by:

- Preserving natural roost sites, including trees with cavities and peeling bark. Dead fronds left on palms can also provide roosting spots for bats.
- Putting up a bat house.
- Sealing potential entry points in your homes.
- Avoid handling or touching any wild animal including bats.
- Report unusual bat behavior, or sick or dead bats to: [MyFWC.com/BatMortality](https://myfwc.com/batmortality).

**For information on removing bats from your home please visit the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's Bats Guidance](#).**

## Updated Guidelines for the Treatment of Latent Tuberculosis Infection

Approximately 13 million persons in the United States are estimated to be infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the majority of these persons are asymptomatic and considered to have latent tuberculosis infection [LTBI]. Approximately 5% - 10% of LTBI persons will progress to active tuberculosis during their lifetime. Typically, this occurs in older age or with a weakened immune system and accounts for 80% of active tuberculosis infections in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Treatment of LTBI is recommended to prevent this progression.

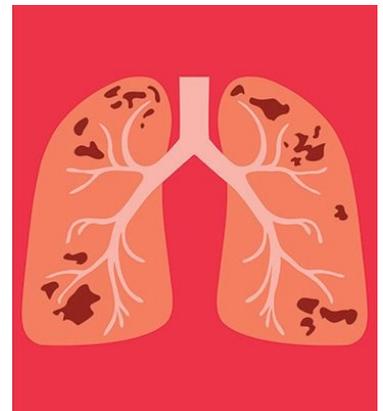
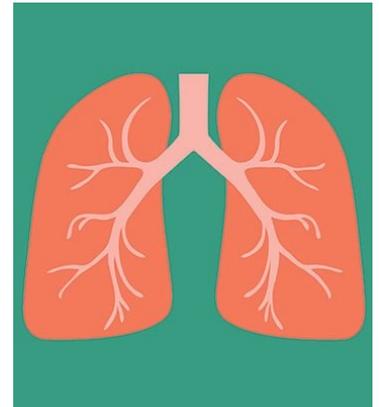
Recently, the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association [NCTA] and the CDC updated guidance on LTBI treatment.

### Preferred Treatments

- Three months of directly observed treatment of Isoniazid plus Rifampin, weekly, is strongly recommended for adults and children over two years old including HIV-positive persons.
- Four months of daily rifampin is strongly recommended for HIV-negative adults and children of all ages.
- Three months of daily Isoniazid plus Rifampin is conditionally recommended for adults and children of all ages. Treatment in HIV-positive persons should consider drug interactions.

**Please review the [CDC's Treatment Regimens for Latent TB Infection](#)**

1 CDC. (2020). Guidelines for the Treatment of latent Tuberculosis Infection: recommendations from the national Tuberculosis Controls Association and the CDC, 2020. *MMWR*.



## U.S. Based Outbreaks

Infectious disease outbreaks currently being reported on by CDC can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/outbreaks/index.html>

# Select Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	Pinellas		YTD Total		Pinellas Annual Totals		
	Feb 2020	Feb 2019	Pinellas 2020	Florida 2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>A. Vaccine Preventable</b>							
Measles	0	0	0	1	1	7	0
Mumps	1	0	1	24	7	10	3
Pertussis	4	1	6	102	27	32	36
Varicella	2	1	11	157	33	67	24
<b>B. CNS Diseases &amp; Bacteremias</b>							
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	0	0	5	3	1	2
Meningitis (Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic)	0	2	0	24	7	9	7
Meningococcal Disease	0	0	0	10	1	1	0
<b>C. Enteric Infections</b>							
Campylobacteriosis	25	25	50	663	310	264	207
Cryptosporidiosis	4	3	8	69	64	34	40
Cyclosporiasis	0	0	0	1	28	4	6
<i>E. coli</i> Shiga Toxin (+)	1	0	3	106	24	15	22
Giardiasis	4	6	5	154	52	41	45
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Listeriosis	0	0	0	6	2	1	0
Salmonellosis	8	4	25	725	201	233	279
Shigellosis	3	3	4	163	22	40	26
<b>D. Viral Hepatitis</b>							
Hepatitis A	1	52	2	314	377	113	1
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman +HBsAg	2	2	6	54	24	14	25
Hepatitis B, Acute	2	6	4	110	72	52	51
Hepatitis C, Acute	7	6	22	293	82	40	30
<b>E. Vector Borne/ Zoonoses</b>							
Animal Rabies	0	0	0	11	2	1	3
Rabies, possible exposure	14	7	27	692	128	130	140
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Dengue	0	0	0	21	3	0	0
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	0	2	0	25	22	14	19
Malaria	0	1	1	11	5	3	0
West Nile Virus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zika Virus Disease	0	0	0	2	3	2	5
<b>F. Others</b>							
Chlamydia	387	312	779	n/a	4588	4422	418
Gonorrhea	89	96	214	n/a	1537	1439	1574
Hansen's Disease	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
Legionellosis	2	1	7	148	43	37	28
Mercury Poisoning	0	0	0	5	1	1	1
Syphilis, Total	27	46	71	n/a	479	438	382
Syphilis, Primary and Secondary	9	19	29	n/a	213	190	160
Syphilis, Early Latent	9	17	24	n/a	191	158	128
Syphilis, Congenital	0	0	1	n/a	6	2	5
Syphilis, Late Syphilis	9	10	17	n/a	69	88	89
Tuberculosis	3	2	6	n/a	23	33	28
<i>Vibrio</i> Infections	0	0	0	24	18	6	11

\*YTD up to March 01, 2020. n/a = not available at this time

Reportable diseases include confirmed and probable cases only. All case counts are current and provisional. Data is collected from the Merlin Reportable Disease database, surveillance systems maintained at the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County, and Florida CHARTS <http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/default.aspx>. STD data in STARS is continually updated. Please note, data from the previous month takes up to an additional month or more to be correctly updated.

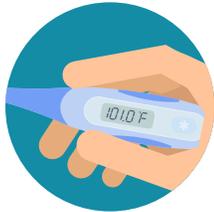
# 10 ways to manage respiratory symptoms at home

If you have fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider. They may tell you to manage your care from home. Follow these tips:

1. **Stay home** from work, school, and away from other public places. If you must go out, avoid using any kind of public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.



2. **Monitor your symptoms** carefully. If your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider immediately.



3. **Get rest and stay hydrated.**



4. If you have a medical appointment, **call the healthcare provider** ahead of time and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.



5. For medical emergencies, call 911 and **notify the dispatch personnel** that you have or may have COVID-19.



6. **Cover your cough and sneezes.**



7. **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



8. As much as possible, **stay** in a specific room and **away from other people** in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people in or outside of the home, wear a facemask.



9. **Avoid sharing personal items** with other people in your household, like dishes, towels, and bedding.



10. **Clean all surfaces** that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs. Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.



For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)