



# EPI-MONITOR

DOH-COLLIER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2026

Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier)

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[Collier.FloridaHealth.gov](http://Collier.FloridaHealth.gov)



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- Disease Spotlight: HIV/AIDS
- FREE HIV Testing Dates
- Influenza Updates
- Norovirus and Foodborne Illness
- Arboviral Disease Updates
- Selected Reportable Diseases in Collier County



## Disease Spotlight: HIV/AIDS

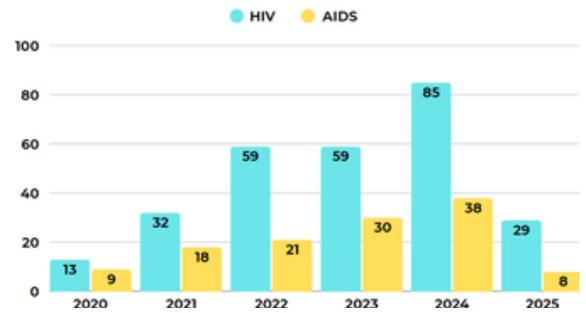
**HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)** is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If untreated, it can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). Today, with proper treatment, people with HIV can live long and healthy lives.

Surveillance plays a vital role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It involves the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and use of data to monitor new cases, track progress, and guide prevention and treatment strategies.

### HIV/AIDS Reporting in Florida:

In Florida, reporting of HIV/AIDS cases is mandatory under Florida Statute 384.25. All cases of HIV infection and AIDS must be reported to the Florida Department of Health within 2 weeks after a positive result. Healthcare providers and laboratories are responsible for reporting new diagnoses and changes in case status.

HIV and AIDS Diagnoses



### How to prevent HIV/AIDS

- Use protection.
- Get tested and know your partner's HIV status.
- Limit the number of sexual partners.
- Never share needles or syringes.
- Consider PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) if at high risk.

### What Is Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)?

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an HIV prevention strategy using oral or long-acting injectable antiretroviral medications to significantly reduce the risk of HIV acquisition among HIV-negative individuals. When taken as prescribed, PrEP prevents HIV from establishing infection.

PrEP does not protect against other sexually transmitted diseases, including syphilis and gonorrhea; condoms are the only method that reduces transmission risk for these infections. Individuals living with HIV should initiate and remain on treatment, while those at increased risk who are HIV-negative may benefit from PrEP. Information on PrEP providers is available at: <https://pleasepreme.org/>



# KNOW YOUR STATUS



## FREE 15-MINUTE RAPID HIV AND HEPATITIS STD SCREENING DAYS

Florida Department of Health-Collier Counseling and Testing Clinic

**FREE TESTING** every **WEDNESDAY** at

DOH-Collier Main Office  
3339 Tamiami Trail East  
Naples, FL 34112

**FREE TESTING** every **TUESDAY** at

DOH-Collier Immokalee Office  
419 North First St.  
Immokalee, FL 34142

No appointment needed. You will be seen in the order of your arrival.

\*\*The information above is subject to change. For verification, please call:

DOH-Collier Main Office: (239) 252-8200

DOH-Collier Immokalee Office: (239) 252-7330

## Influenza Update

Florida is currently seeing a seasonal rise in influenza cases, with Collier County's flu activity on the rise. Typically, we reach our peak in late December or early January, and the levels stay high until late February.

To enhance community readiness, the DOH-Collier Epidemiology Program keeps track of influenza activity using various surveillance systems, including Emergency Department visits tracked through the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE), Merlin Respiratory Dashboard, the number of Influenza-like Illness (ILI) clusters reported in schools, daycare centers, and healthcare facilities, and the county influenza activity levels as reported by the State Epidemiology Program.

Below is a graph which shows the upward trend in emergency department visits related to influenza-like illness in Collier thus far this season.

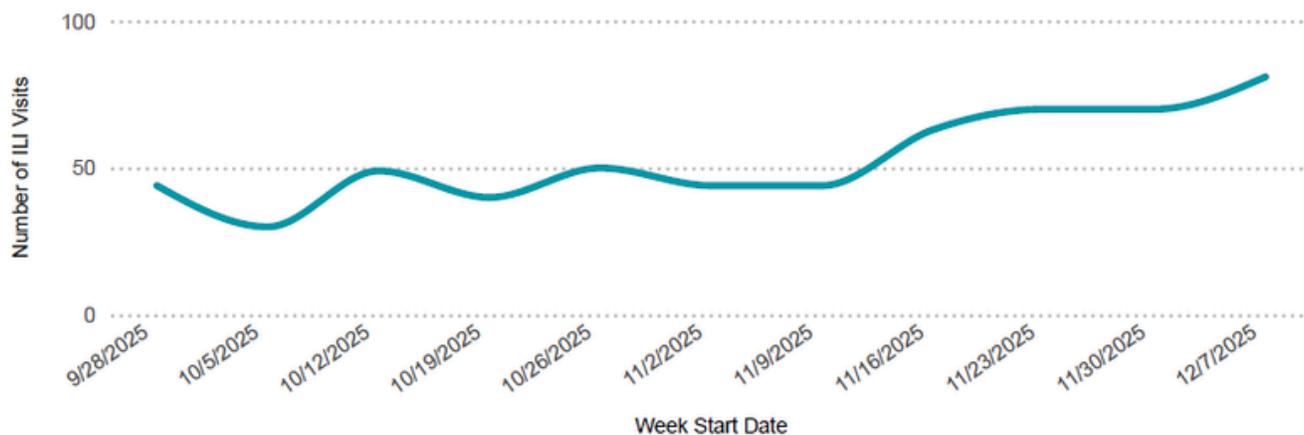
### Seasonal Influenza Prevention

As we enter the height of influenza season, it is important to remember that prevention is our strongest tool. Annual immunization is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. This significantly reduces the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and complications.

Additional prevention tips include:

- Frequent handwashing with soap and water or using alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Avoiding close contact with individuals who are ill.
- Staying home when experiencing flu-like symptoms to prevent community spread.
- Maintaining healthy habits such as adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, and regular physical activity to support immune health.

**Total Number of Influenza-Like Illness Emergency Department Visits in Collier**



# Norovirus and Foodborne Illnesses

Winter months often bring an increase in norovirus, a leading cause of gastroenteritis outbreaks. Highly contagious, norovirus spreads quickly in group settings and is frequently linked to contaminated food, surfaces, or close contact. Holiday gatherings, with shared meals and busy kitchens, create ideal conditions for transmission.

Alongside norovirus, Salmonella and Campylobacter remain important causes of foodborne illness in Florida. These bacterial infections are commonly associated with undercooked poultry, cross-contamination, and improper food handling.

Prevention tips for holiday hosts and guests:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before preparing or eating food.
- Cook poultry, shellfish, and other high-risk foods to safe internal temperatures.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate to avoid cross-contamination.
- Exclude ill individuals from food preparation and gatherings.

With increased travel and festive gatherings, norovirus and foodborne illnesses are more likely to spread. Safe food practices and timely reporting of both individual cases and outbreaks are essential to keeping holiday celebrations healthy and communities protected.



**Provider reminder:** Salmonella and Campylobacter are on Florida's reportable disease list. These foodborne illnesses are reportable by the next business day. In addition, outbreaks of any kind — including foodborne outbreaks such as norovirus — occurring in facilities, schools, long-term care facilities, or other settings must be reported immediately to public health authorities. Prompt reporting ensures rapid investigation, control measures, and protection of vulnerable populations.



## Arboviral Disease Update



Arboviruses, such as Dengue and Chikungunya, continue to pose a public health challenge in Florida. Travel-acquired cases are increasing, particularly among individuals returning from Latin America and the Caribbean, where Dengue activity remains high. Florida has documented numerous imported cases this year, with Cuba and Puerto Rico among the most common sources.

Arboviruses are viruses transmitted by arthropods, most commonly mosquitoes. In Florida, surveillance focuses on endemic viruses such as West Nile virus (WNV), Eastern equine encephalitis virus (EEEV), and St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV), as well as exotic viruses including Dengue virus (DENV), Chikungunya virus (CHIKV), and Zika virus (ZIKV). These pathogens pose a recurring threat due to Florida's subtropical climate and the presence of competent mosquito vectors like *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*.

Several Florida counties — including Brevard, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, and Pasco — have reported locally acquired Dengue transmission. Importantly, Collier County has not yet reported local transmission, though its proximity to affected areas underscores the need for vigilance.

Healthcare providers are reminded to follow Florida's reportable disease requirements: Dengue must be reported upon suspicion or at the time of laboratory order, not only after confirmation. Early reporting ensures timely public health response and mosquito control interventions.

With rising imported cases and local transmission in nearby counties, continued surveillance, mosquito control, and prompt provider reporting are essential to protect Collier County.

## Reminders

**Rabies Possible Exposure:** If a patient has an exposure requiring post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), treatment must start at the emergency room and the epidemiology program must be contacted 239-252-8226. Please fax a copy of the animal bite report to Domestic Animals Services (fax: 239-530-7775) as soon as possible. It is important that the bite reports are submitted to Collier County Domestic Animal Services in a timely manner so that investigations can begin as soon as possible. The epidemiology program is available for consultation regarding the initiation of rabies PEP.

**Reportable Diseases/Conditions:** Provided a patient is diagnosed with a disease or health condition that is reportable under Florida law, someone from the epidemiology program at the DOH-Collier will be contacting them via telephone, mail, and/or home visit to conduct an epidemiologic interview.

**Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention:** Infants born to women who test HBsAg-positive should receive hepatitis B immune globulin and the hepatitis B vaccine series. DOH-Collier monitors these infants' vaccine records, and then requests post vaccine testing to confirm immunity to hepatitis B after completion of the vaccine series. Current household, sexual, and needle-sharing contacts of pre-natal clients who test HBsAg-positive will be identified, and the DOH-Collier will provide testing and immunoprophylaxis for these individuals. If you have a pregnant client who tests HBsAg-positive, please notify the epidemiology program at 239-252-8226.

# Comparison of Selected Reportable Diseases for Collier County, 2024-2025

	January-December 2024	January-December 2025
<b>Central Nervous System &amp; Invasive Diseases</b>		
CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE (CJD)	1	1
MENINGITIS (BACTERIAL, CRYPTOCOCCAL, MYCOTIC)	1	1
MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE	0	1
<b>Hepatitis</b>		
HEPATITIS A	0	2
HEPATITIS B ACUTE	7	6
HEPATITIS B (+HBsAg IN PREGNANT WOMEN)*	9	10
HEPATITIS B CHRONIC	96	58
HEPATITIS C ACUTE	10	5
HEPATITIS C CHRONIC	118	65
<b>Enteric Diseases</b>		
CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS	146	158
CHOLERA (VIBRIO CHOLERA, TYPE O1)	0	0
CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS	13	7
CYCLOSPORIASIS	0	1
ESCHERICHIA COLI, SHIGA TOXIN PRODUCING	30	14
GIARDIASIS	20	15
HEMOLYTIC UREMIC SYNDROME	0	0
SALMONELLOSIS	129	129
SHIGELLOSIS	16	14
VIBRIO ALGINOLYTICUS	6	1
VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS	2	1
VIBRIO VULNIFICUS	1	2
OTHER VIBRIO SPECIES	5	3
<b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases</b>		
INFLUENZA A (NOVEL OR PANDEMIC STRAINS)	0	0
INFLUENZA A (PEDIATRIC MORTALITY)	0	0
MUMPS	1	2
PERTUSSIS	28	39
VARICELLA	14	5
<b>Vector Borne &amp; Zoonotic Diseases</b>		
ANIMAL BITE (PEP RECOMMENDED)	128	113
BRUCELLA	0	0
DENGUE FEVER (Imported)	18	9
LYME DISEASE	16	38
MALARIA	1	1
RABID ANIMALS	1	1
SPOTTED FEVER RICKETTSIOSES	0	0
WEST NILE VIRUS	2	1
<b>Others</b>		
CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING	10	6
CIGUATERA	4	3
LEAD POISONING	69	22
LEGIONELLA	9	16
LISTERIOSIS	0	3
PESTICIDE-RELATED ILLNESS/INJURY	0	0
<b>Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)</b>		
CHLAMYDIA	1310	1144
GONORRHEA	232	192
SYPHILIS	260	169

\*Disease counts for 2025 are preliminary