

You caught covid? You're going to DIE!

Not true! Seriously. I know it's frightening. We've all seen the news and heard the statistics. But a lot of people (A LOT of people!) have recovered just fine. I'm one of them. I was really sick at the beginning of this thing. I had most of the bad stuff they talk about—no sense of taste or smell, fever, body aches, fatigue like crazy for weeks. But I'm fine. I have no lasting effects, and neither does my husband who was sick at the same time I was. There are many more stories like mine than stories like the bad ones you see in the news.

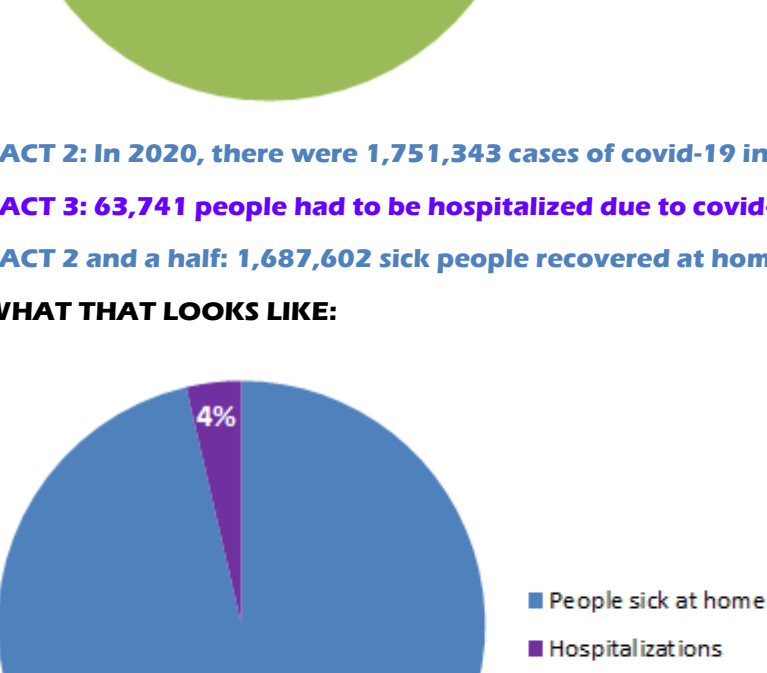
It's a serious disease, yes. It's contagious, yes. So **BE CAREFUL!** But don't be so scared that your anxiety makes you miserable. Here, let me show you what I mean, and what the numbers really are.

FACT 1: There are 21,761,560 people living in Florida.

FACT 2: In 2020, there were 1,751,343 cases of covid-19 in Florida.

FACT 1 and a half: 20,461,032 people haven't had a positive covid test.

WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE:

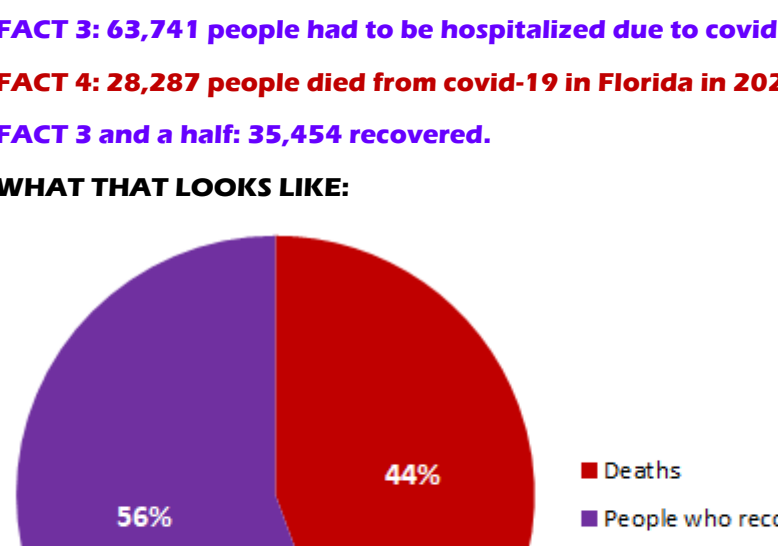


FACT 2: In 2020, there were 1,751,343 cases of covid-19 in Florida.

FACT 3: 63,741 people had to be hospitalized due to covid-19.

FACT 2 and a half: 1,687,602 sick people recovered at home.

WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE:



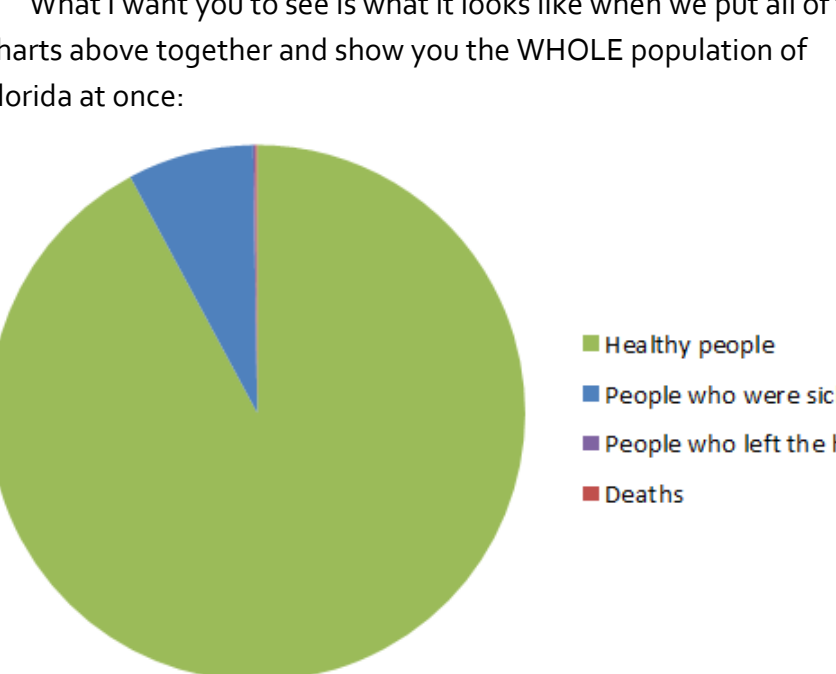
Not looking too bad so far, is it? One more statistic, and it's a little scary, so bear with me.

FACT 3: 63,741 people had to be hospitalized due to covid-19.

FACT 4: 28,287 people died from covid-19 in Florida in 2020.

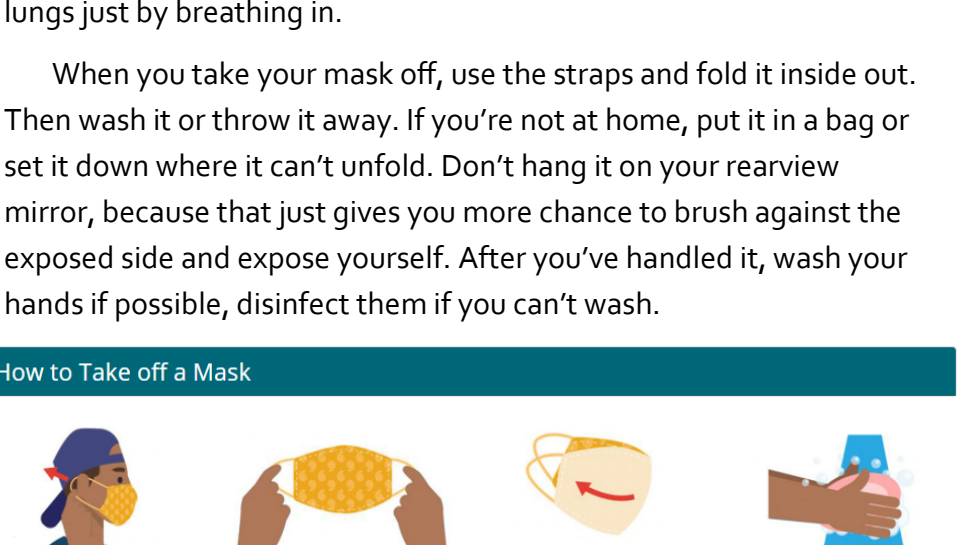
FACT 3 and a half: 35,454 recovered.

WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE:



Like I said, it's scary. But keep in mind that we've learned a lot since the beginning. The recovery rates keep getting better and better. The information above includes everyone from the very beginning when we had no idea what we were dealing with, and were just treating the symptoms like a regular lung infection.

What I want you to see is what it looks like when we put all of the charts above together and show you the **WHOLE** population of Florida at once:



Can you see the red? It's there, and we need to pay attention to it. But don't let anxiety about it take over your life. Breathe. I promise, we will get through this.

So what do I do now?

First, don't forget to wash your hands. Not just for covid-19, but it helps prevent you from catching lots of things which are contagious through the mucus membranes (yeah, scientific jargon, sorry about that ... eyes, nose, mouth ... any opening on your body that is wet).

Second, make sure that you're wearing and caring for your mask properly. Keep in mind that the outside of your mask may have been exposed to the virus. If you touch it and then touch your face, you have been exposed. Period. You might not get sick, but why take the chance? If you slide it to your chin or hang it off your ear, you've just opened up the chance that the virus is going to be brought into your lungs just by breathing in.

When you take your mask off, use the straps and fold it inside out. Then wash it or throw it away. If you're not at home, put it in a bag or set it down where it can't unfold. Don't hang it on your rearview mirror, because that just gives you more chance to brush against the exposed side and expose yourself. After you've handled it, wash your hands if possible, disinfect them if you can't wash.

How to Take off a Mask



①

Carefully, untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops



②

Handle only by the earloops or ties



③

Fold the outside corners together



④

Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing

Graphic from the CDC's Website. ©2020

Third, studies show that the more open the area, the better your chance to avoid exposure. Small, enclosed spaces with people standing close together increase risk, so avoid them where possible. We've all heard about social distancing, and it can make a big difference. By the time we have this thing mostly under control (do we ever really have the flu under control?), 6 feet will be a measurement we know by instinct.

One last thing to keep in mind. Getting infected with anything requires a specific level of exposure. We don't know exactly what that level is for covid, but infection (successful exposure) is made up of two things: how **much** you're exposed, and how **long** you're exposed. You can reduce how much you're exposed by staying away from people who are sick, wearing a mask, and keeping your distance from everyone you don't live with (and even from your family if they've been exposed outside of the house). And you can limit how long you're exposed by shortening the time you spend close to other people.

Stay safe! Keep smiling! And know that no matter what you might hear, most of the world is healthy and staying that way!