

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Community Risk Dial Moved to Orange

The COVID-19 Community Risk Dial for the week of October 5th is orange, meaning residents of southwest Nebraska have a high risk of contracting COVID-19. The risk level was raised due to an increase in community spread across several counties and higher demand on the healthcare system.

Moving to orange, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) strongly recommends everyone wear a mask in public and wash hands and surfaces often. Limit travel and work from home when possible. High-risk and vulnerable individuals should avoid public places.

SWNPHD had 63 new cases of COVID-19 reported September 29th to October 5th at noon. A breakout by county includes: Chase – 11; Dundy -1; Frontier – 3; Furnas –10; Hitchcock -9; Keith – 6; Perkins – 1; Red Willow – 22, and no cases this week reported in Hayes County. This brings the totals for the health district to 289 cases with 190 cases recovered. Many of these recent cases are related to outbreaks in Red Willow County and Chase County and are a result of direct contact with a positive COVID-19 person.

“The higher numbers of cases and deaths in the last few weeks highlights the importance of separating those who are sick from the rest of the public,” states Melissa Propp, RN Public Health Nurse. “Please stay home if you have any symptoms–don’t wait until you feel ‘sick enough’ to stay home. It doesn’t take severe symptoms to pass it on; if you have mild symptoms you still spread the virus, and you may spread it to someone who cares for a vulnerable person.”

SWNPHD recommends anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 get tested and stay home while waiting for results. COVID-19 symptoms may include one or more: loss of taste or smell, “sinus infection-like symptoms”, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, fever, loss of appetite, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea, fatigue, muscle aches, head ache, chills and shaking. Anyone waiting for COVID-19 test results is required to self-isolate, so that no one else is exposed while they are waiting.

- If the test is negative, then self-isolation is over once all the symptoms are better.
- If the test is positive, then isolation continues at least 10 days and until public health officials confirm the person is no longer contagious.

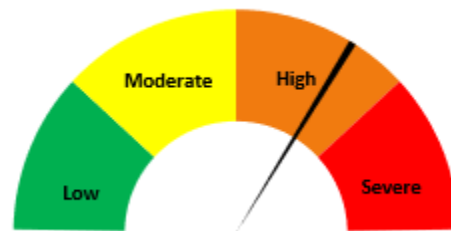
After someone tests positive and self-isolates at home, anyone else who lives in the home is required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

- If the sick person can isolate away from others in the home, then quarantine is 14 days from their last contact with the sick person.

- If the sick person cannot be separate from others in the home, then quarantine is 14 days after the sick person is recovered and released from isolation.

COVID-19 information is available at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and [swhealth.ne.gov](https://www.swhealth.ne.gov). You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook.

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COVID ORANGE: High Risk of COVID-19 Spread		
General Public	Outside the Home – Work, Social, In Public	At Home
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at home unless traveling for work, medical care, or food • Distance at least 6 feet from anyone outside the home • Work from home if possible • Individual outdoor activities such as walking, biking, etc. are acceptable • Smallest number of contacts feasible • Gatherings only with modifications for COVID-19 • Events only as guided by SWNPHD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No distancing for people without symptoms, unless they are under quarantine as a result of being exposed to someone who is infected • Self-isolation of symptomatic persons • Outdoor activities with members of your household are acceptable
Face Covering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings strongly recommended for anyone over 2 years old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No face coverings for people without symptoms, unless they are under quarantine as a result of being exposed to someone who is infected • Face coverings for symptomatic people
Hand Washing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently wash hands for at least 20 seconds, especially after touching high contact surfaces, sneezing/coughing/touching face, or before eating • Use hand sanitizer when handwashing is inaccessible or infeasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently wash hands for at least 20 seconds, especially after touching high contact surfaces, sneezing/coughing/touching face, or before eating
Illness Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If sick with Flu-like or COVID-like symptoms, Stay at Home • Minimize contact with symptomatic people • Daily temperature checks at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily temperature checks • Monitor for COVID-like symptoms • Contact healthcare provider if sick • Monitor the health of anyone in your home with COVID-like symptoms
Disinfecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid bare hand contact with any high touch surface • Use barrier such as paper towel or clothing when bare hand contact is unavoidable • Wash hands or apply sanitizer after touching high contact surfaces • Enhanced disinfection, especially for high contact surfaces (door/other handles, light switches, bathroom fixtures) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced disinfection, especially for high contact surfaces (door/other handles, light switches, bathroom fixtures)
At-Risk or Vulnerable Population	For adults over age 65, anyone with underlying health conditions, and other populations at heightened risk from COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home as much as possible • Rely on help for needs outside the home (groceries, medications, etc.) • Distance from those working outside of the home 	