

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 and Other Illnesses On the Rise

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is seeing COVID-19 case numbers on the rise again over the past two weeks. Local clinics are also seeing high rates of influenza and other respiratory illnesses like RSV. Hospitals in the health district are struggling to transfer patients that need intensive care, due to the high numbers of sick people across Nebraska and Colorado, which is affecting both COVID and non-COVID patients.

SWNPHD had 192 new cases of COVID-19 reported from November 9 to November 15, 2021, with a weekly average of 128 cases per week in the last 30 days. A breakdown by age includes: 0 to 19 – 21; 20 to 29 – 28; 30 to 39 – 38; 40 to 49 – 15; 50 to 59 – 31; 60 to 69 – 30; 70 to 79 – 13; 80 and over – 16. The total number of cases is 5,475.

Of the 192 weekly positives, 1 was identified as fully vaccinated. Most of the vaccine breakthrough cases such as this one are in those aged 60 and over. Booster doses are now available for everyone 65 and older in Nebraska, which are proving to be effective at preventing breakthrough infections and hospitalizations.

Current data is also showing benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for those who previously had COVID-19. Their immune system creates a strong response to the vaccine, giving them excellent protection against reinfection. The protection from disease-induced immunity varies greatly from person to person, depending on many factors including their antibody response. Researchers currently do not know what level of antibodies equals immunity.

SWNPHD strongly recommends residents protect themselves against the ongoing spread of COVID-19 in southwest Nebraska, which includes avoiding crowds, close contact, and closed spaces, and vaccination against flu and COVID-19 for eligible ages.

Home testing for COVID-19 is an option available at many pharmacies and retailers. If your home test shows you are positive for COVID-19, SWNPHD's website swhealth.ne.gov has infographics on isolation and quarantine and a COVID Calculator to help you and your loved ones know how long to stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19 to others.

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 and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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