

News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Have You Gotten Your Flu Shot?

Influenza has begun circulating in southwest Nebraska, reports Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). Influenza (flu) is a serious respiratory disease that affects about 30 million people annually in the United States. The best way to reduce the risk of having serious complications from this preventable disease is to get an annual flu shot.

“We are seeing a lot of these respiratory viruses going around right now, like flu, RSV, and adenovirus. Now is the perfect time to get your flu shot before the holiday season begins,” states Melissa Propp, SWNPHD Public Health Nurse. “It takes two weeks for your body to develop immunity after getting a flu shot.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) there have been 360 deaths associated with flu in the United States already this season. Influenza usually begins to circulate around October and goes through May. Some people are at higher risk for developing flu-related complications or severe illness. These include:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum)
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

The flu shot is approved for people aged 6 months and older. SWNPHD also recommends everyday preventive actions like staying home if you are sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and frequent handwashing to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses like flu, RSV and COVID-19. Flu shots do not contain the COVID-19 vaccine. There are two separate shots for flu and COVID-19 which can be given at the same time or on different days.

“You may spread the flu to other people even before you show symptoms,” explains Propp. “This can happen as early as one day before becoming sick and up to a week afterwards. Having a flu shot on board even if you are young and healthy can help stop the spread of flu in our area.”

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov. For more information call (308) 345-4223; one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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