

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Paula Wimer, Program Manager at 308-345-4223

Cover Your Coughs and Sneezes

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) reminds everyone to cover their coughs, especially during this time of year when viruses are making many people sick. Viruses like RSV and COVID-19 have been spreading at high levels throughout November and December, and now flu (influenza) is present as well. Covering your coughs and sneezes and keeping your hands clean can help prevent the spread of these serious respiratory illnesses.

Germs can be easily spread by:

- Coughing, sneezing, or talking.
- Touching your face with unwashed hands after touching contaminated surfaces or objects such as door handles.
- Touching surfaces or objects that may be frequently touched by other people such as handrails.

How you can prevent the spread of germs:

1. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
2. Throw used tissue away in the trash and do not reuse it.
3. If you do not have a tissue near you, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shirt, not your hands.

Remember to immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to protect yourself and your loved ones from getting sick.

How to wash germs off hands:

1. Wash your hands in warm water.
2. Scrub your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Time counts the most!
3. Rinse your hands well.
4. Dry your hands completely, turn the water off with the paper towel, and then throw away the paper towel.
5. If you cannot wash your hands, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean your hands.

For more information or to schedule a handwashing demonstration, contact Paula at 308-345-4223. You can also find free handwashing posters or on our website at swhealth.ne.gov. Handwashing stickers are also available at the office. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th (one block north of Arby's) in McCook, 409 Broadway in Imperial and 418 North Spruce in Ogallala. Information can also be found on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

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