

## **News Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **COVID-19 Boosters**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to get their COVID-19 booster shots to protect against severe illness from COVID-19. The virus that causes COVID-19 was first reported in 2019, with the first cases in Nebraska in 2020. Since then, waves of infections have spread around the country and made millions of people sick. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends being up to date on vaccinations that protect against COVID-19 to reduce the risk of becoming severely ill and needing hospital care.

### **Who Needs a COVID-19 Booster?**

- If you have never gotten a COVID-19 shot, you can get a single dose of the updated vaccine. Children may need more than one dose depending on their age.
- If you got one or two doses of the original shot but have not had a booster, you can get a single dose of the updated vaccine.
- If you are ages 65 years and older and had a booster of the updated vaccine, you have the option to receive 1 additional dose at least 4 months after your last booster.

Most people ages 6 years and older who are not immunocompromised and have already gotten a dose of the updated vaccine do not need any more doses right now. The FDA is currently working on recommendations for an updated booster in the fall that will include protection from the more recent strains of COVID-19 that have been circulating. This process is much like the annual flu shot selection.

“Immunity from vaccines and past infection goes down over time, so having a recent shot is very important,” explains Lori Rowley RN, Public Health Nurse at SWNPHD. “New variants of COVID-19 are highly contagious; we need layers of protection to reduce our risk, and every layer helps. This includes lots of ventilation with fresh air, staying up to date on vaccinations, staying home if you’re sick, and wearing a mask if you have symptoms of COVID-19.”

Fact sheets with more information to help understand the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccines are available at [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) and at SWNPHD offices in McCook and Ogallala. Talk to your healthcare provider or the public health nurse if you have questions about COVID-19 shots or any other immunizations.

For more information, call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red

Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Call (308) 345-4223 one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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