

## **News Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Updated Guidelines for COVID-19 and other Respiratory Viruses**

January and February of this year continued the trend of high numbers of respiratory illnesses in southwest Nebraska, from the peak in December. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has received reports of three deaths from this respiratory season: one from RSV and two from COVID-19.

SWNPHD recommends following the updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help you know what to do if you get a respiratory virus. This includes guidance on when to stay home and the recommendation for another dose of the updated COVID vaccine for those 65 and older.

### **Protect yourself and others from Flu, COVID-19, and RSV**

When you have a respiratory virus, stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick). Respiratory virus symptoms can include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache, among others.

- You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, your symptoms are getting better overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
- When you go back to your normal activities, take added precautions over the next 5 days, such as taking additional steps for cleaner air, hygiene, masks, physical distancing, and testing if you will be around other people indoors.

Keep in mind that you may still be able to spread the virus that made you sick, even if you are feeling better. You are likely to be less contagious at this time, depending on factors like how long you were sick or how sick you were. If you develop a fever or start to feel worse after you have gone back to normal activities, stay home and follow the above recommendations again.

There are safe and effective vaccines for flu, COVID-19, and RSV, that protect against severe illness and hospitalization. The CDC recommends all people ages 65 years and older should receive one additional dose of any updated (2023-2024 formula) COVID-19 vaccine. This shot can be given when it has been at least 4 months since your last dose of COVID vaccine.

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, You Tube, TikTok and Instagram or view the website at [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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