

## NEWS RELEASE

December 7, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Layers of Protection Work Against COVID-19**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents of the health district to use multiple layers of protection to reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19. There are several strategies to limit exposure to this virus, for individuals and for communities. These strategies become more effective when used together.

- Practice good health habits: stay home when sick, cover your cough, and wash hands often for 20+ seconds.
- Wear a mask and limit time in crowded areas.
- Use increased ventilation and air filtration.
- Follow isolation and quarantine instructions if sick or exposed.
- Get tested in a timely manner and notify close contacts right away if positive.
- Share public education messages with reliable information.
- Take advantage of vaccination when it becomes available.

(Based on the Swiss Cheese Model by Dr. James Reason, PhD)

The instructions for isolation and quarantine are in the state of Nebraska's Directed Health Measures, which now include the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with alternative options for the length of quarantine for those exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19. A full 14-day quarantine is still the best course of action to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and is the option recommended by SWNPHD. For situations when financial hardship or other circumstances make 14 days challenging, there are two other options.

- With testing: may leave quarantine after 7 days IF they get tested on day 5 or after, they do not test positive, do not have symptoms, and agree to continue monitoring for symptoms and wear a face covering through day 14.
- Without testing: may leave quarantine after 10 days IF they do not have symptoms and agree to continue monitoring for symptoms and wear a face covering through day 14.

SWNPHD had 261 new cases of COVID-19 reported December 1st to December 7th at noon. A breakout by county includes: Chase – 18; Dundy – 10; Frontier – 4; Furnas – 26; Hayes – 3; Hitchcock – 19; Keith – 69; Perkins – 34; Red Willow – 78. There is community spread occurring in all nine counties. This brings the totals for the health district to 2298 cases with 1956 cases recovered. SWNPHD also received confirmation of 6 additional deaths due to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 Community Risk Dial for the week of December 7th is red, meaning residents of southwest Nebraska are at severe risk of contracting COVID-19. SWNPHD asks that residents of the health district stay at home when possible, except for essential errands. If you do leave home, wear a mask or face covering. High-risk and vulnerable individuals should limit their contact with

those who work outside the home. All gatherings and events are strongly discouraged until the risk dial is no longer in the red.

The full Directed Health Measures can be found at [dhhs.ne.gov](http://dhhs.ne.gov) and at [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov). You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. 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.

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## COVID EXPOSED HOW TO QUARANTINE

If you have been within **6 feet** of someone with COVID-19 for a total of **15 minutes** or more on any day that they may have been infectious, you are a **close contact**. You must quarantine.

### FOR THE NEXT 14 DAYS...

#### WATCH YOURSELF FOR SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Tiredness
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

#### WEAR A MASK

Whenever you are with any other people, even if you are at home.

Make sure it fits over your mouth and nose.

#### CALL YOUR DOCTOR and GET TESTED IF YOU HAVE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS.

