

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Vaccine Approved for Ages 5 to 11

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has pediatric doses of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine now available. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the Pfizer pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in ages 5 to 11 at the end of October, and now the official guidelines and recommendations have been given by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

The vaccine was studied in 3,100 children and showed the pediatric vaccine is 90.7% effective. Side effects are usually mild and may include soreness, headache, fatigue, or low-grade fever, which are like the adult dose. These are temporary and show that the body is building immunity, which is better for children than the possible long-term effects of getting COVID-19 infection. COVID-19 cases in children can result in hospitalizations, MIS-C (inflammatory syndromes) and long-term complications in which symptoms can linger for months.

The pediatric dose is smaller than the adult dose and comes separately. Providers who will be giving the vaccine to ages 5 to 11 include SWNPHD, Mark's Pharmacy in Cambridge, Adam's Drug in Imperial, and Dundy County Hospital in Benkelman.

If your child has not yet received a flu shot, they can get both flu and COVID vaccines at the same time. Both shots are strongly recommended, due to the high number of respiratory illnesses that are circulating in the health district including influenza, RSV and COVID-19. While most of the COVID-19 cases are caused by the Delta variant, two more variants of COVID-19, including AY3, have recently been reported in SWNPHD.

SWNPHD had 148 new cases of COVID-19 reported from November 2 to November 8, 2021, bringing the weekly average to 116 cases per week in the last 30 days. A breakdown by age includes: 0 to 19 – 30; 20 to 29 – 14; 30 to 39 – 20; 40 to 49 – 23; 50 to 59 – 22; 60 to 69 – 22; 70 to 79 – 10; 80 and over – 7. The total number of cases is 5,283. Three additional deaths due to COVID-19 were also reported. SWNPHD continues to recommend residents protect themselves against the ongoing spread of COVID-19 in southwest Nebraska, which includes avoiding crowded closed spaces and vaccination for eligible ages.

Visit swhealth.ne.gov for information on COVID-19. 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 and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223.

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