

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Updated COVID-19 Guidance Due to Spread of Omicron

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has received updated isolation and quarantine guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The updates are based on data and observations of the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, which showed that the virus is most likely to be passed on within the first 5 days of infection. While no confirmed cases of Omicron have been identified in southwest Nebraska, it has quickly become the dominant strain overall in Nebraska and case rates are expected to increase rapidly with this highly contagious virus.

Details on Updated Guidelines

Isolation: People with COVID-19 should isolate for 5 days. Then if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are better (without fever for 24 hours), follow that by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others to minimize the risk of infecting other people.

Quarantine: For people who are unvaccinated or are more than six months out from their second dose and not yet boosted, CDC now recommends quarantine for 5 days followed by strict mask use for an additional 5 days. Individuals who have received their booster shot do not need to quarantine following an exposure but should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure.

For all those exposed, CDC recommends getting tested for COVID-19 5 days after exposure. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not due to COVID-19.

Where to Get Tested

Call your healthcare provider for their instructions on testing for COVID-19. Home test kits are also available at many local pharmacies. COVID-19 testing is available at Mark's Pharmacy in Cambridge Tuesday through Friday. Register online at registermytime.com/tw/markspharmacy. Walgreen's North Platte – drive thru testing call 308-532-4303 and Dr Deb's Express North Platte – call to schedule 308-221-6068.

Where to Get Vaccinated

Vaccination decreases the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. SWNPHD strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 5 and older and boosters for everyone 16 and older. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. Data from areas where Omicron is spreading shows that vaccine effectiveness against infection for Pfizer and Moderna is approximately 35%. A booster dose restores vaccine effectiveness to 75%.

Locations for Vaccinations:

Dundy County Hospital/Quality Healthcare Clinic	Benkelman	(308) 423-2151 ask for Nicole
Mark's Pharmacy	Cambridge	(308) 697-3400
Perkins County Hospital	Grant	(308) 352-7200
Adams Drug	Imperial	(308) 882-4949 Healthmartcovidvaccine.com
Chase County Clinic	Imperial	(308) 882-7299
Farrell's Pharmacy	McCook	(308) 345-1781
Red Willow County Health Department	McCook	(308) 345-1790
Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department	McCook	(308) 345-4223
U-Save Pharmacy	McCook	(308) 345-5670 Usavemccook.com
Walmart Pharmacy	McCook	(308) 345-7024 Walmart.com/pharmacy
Safeway Pharmacy	Ogallala	(308) 284-3670 Safeway.com/covid-19
U-Save Pharmacy	Ogallala	(308) 284-2242
Walmart Pharmacy	Ogallala	(308) 284-0118 Walmart.com/pharmacy

SWNPHD had 224 new cases of COVID-19 reported from December 14 to January 3, 2021, with weekly totals of 58, 74 and 92 cases. The average number of cases per week in the last 30 days was 81. The total number of COVID cases is 6,328. Information on COVID cases at the county level can be found on the CDC's Data Tracker at [covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/](https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/). SWNPHD strongly recommends residents take precautions against the spread of this virus by avoiding crowds, wearing a mask indoors when crowds cannot be avoided, frequent handwashing, and vaccination for eligible ages.

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. The website www.swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties.

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