

July 17, 2020

For Immediate Release

Contact: Myra Stoney, Health Director, director@swhealth.ne.gov, 308-345-4223

Southwest Nebraska's COVID-19 Community Risk Dial

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has launched its COVID-19 Community Risk Dial. The color-coded dial depicts the phase of the pandemic in the nine-county health district of southwest Nebraska and provides specific guidance for residents to protect themselves and others and prevent the spread of the virus. The dial is located on the health department website at www.swhealth.ne.gov under the COVID-19 information. The dial for the week of July 13th is in the yellow.

“The risk dial was developed by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD), which shared their dial tool with other local public health departments to customize for their communities,” states Myra Stoney, Health Director at SWNPHD. “The dial is a valuable tool to make informed decisions about COVID-19 risk.”

The COVID-19 Risk Dial was developed by a team from LLCHD, Lincoln Fire and Rescue and City Communications to provide a simple tool to help residents know what actions and behaviors they can take to protect their own health and the health of others. The dial for southwest Nebraska will be updated every Monday using local data to determine the risk. The main factors that will be considered include the following:

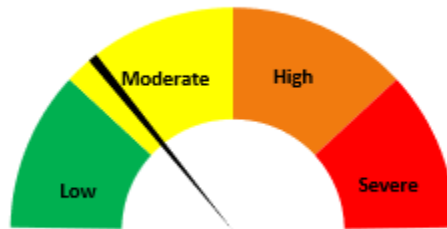
- The increase or decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases
- The increase or decrease in the percent of tests that are positive
- The availability of testing
- The ability of the Health Department to conduct investigations and contact tracing
- The number of people hospitalized from COVID-19
- The capacity of the local health care system
- The availability of personal protective equipment and critical medical equipment

The COVID-19 Risk Dial shows the level of risk using four colors to represent the phases described in the Federal Guidance on Reopening America, Johns Hopkins University Guidance for Governors on Reopening States, and guidance documents from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For each risk color, specific recommendations are provided for physical distancing, face covering, hand washing, illness monitoring and disinfection, both for outside the home and at home. Specific guidance is included for people at risk for complications due to COVID-19.

For more information on COVID-19 in southwest Nebraska, visit www.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.

###



COVID Yellow: Moderate Risk of COVID-19 Spread		
General Public	Outside the Home – Work, Social, In Public	At Home
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider staying at home most of the time, with caution for non-essential travel and work Distance at least 6 feet from anyone outside the home Work from home if possible Individual outdoor activities such as walking, biking, etc. are acceptable Cautious expansion of interactions with others, outdoor activities preferred Gatherings only with modifications for COVID-19 Events only as guided by LLCHD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No distancing for people without symptoms, unless they are under quarantine as a result of being exposed to someone who is infected Self-isolation of symptomatic persons Outdoor activities with distancing are acceptable.
Face Covering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face coverings suggested when unable to distance Face coverings for symptomatic people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No face coverings for people without symptoms, unless they are under quarantine as a result of being exposed to someone who is infected Face coverings for symptomatic people
Hand Washing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently wash hands for at least 20 seconds, especially after touching high contact surfaces, sneezing/coughing/touching face, or before eating Use hand sanitizer when handwashing is inaccessible or infeasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently wash hands for at least 20 seconds, especially after touching high contact surfaces, sneezing/coughing/touching face, or before eating
Illness Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If ill with Flu-like or COVID-like symptoms, Stay at Home Minimize contact with symptomatic people Daily temperature checks at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor for COVID-like symptoms
Disinfecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid bare hand contact with any high touch surface Use barrier such as paper towel or clothing when bare hand contact is unavoidable Wash hands or apply sanitizer after touching high contact surfaces Enhanced disinfection, especially for high contact surfaces (door/other handles, light switches, bathroom fixtures) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced disinfection, especially for high contact surfaces (door/other handles, light switches, bathroom fixtures)
At-Risk or Vulnerable Population	<p>For adults over age 65, anyone with underlying health conditions, and other populations at heightened risk from COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home as much as possible Rely on help for needs outside the home (groceries, medications, etc.) Distance from those working outside of the home 	