

News Release

For Immediate Release

August 17, 2022

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Many COVID Vaccine Options Now Available

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) now has several options available for COVID-19 vaccinations. The age groups that are eligible have expanded to include everyone 6 months of age and older, with mRNA and traditional vaccine options to choose from.

“Going into the fall and winter seasons, having a COVID shot within the last six months is the best protection against severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19,” explains Melissa Propp, Clinic Manager for SWNPHD. “Cases have remained steady throughout the summer and are expected to rise during the fall like they have the past two years.”

Adult Vaccines

Along with the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines that have been in use, adults 18 and older can now get Novavax. Novavax is a protein-based COVID vaccine that is made like other traditional vaccines such as shingles and DTaP. It contains copies of the spike protein for SARS-CoV-2 and does not contain any live virus. It also does not contain PEG (polyethylene glycol) so may be used for people with allergies to PEG. It is only for primary series, not booster doses, and at this time cannot be interchanged with other vaccines.

Child Vaccines

Both Pfizer and Moderna now have COVID vaccines that are approved for children and adolescents aged 6 months and older. COVID-19 has become one of the top 10 causes of pediatric death in the United States. According to Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, every week in Nebraska several children are hospitalized because of this virus. While children and adolescents are typically at lower risk than adults of becoming severely ill or hospitalized from COVID-19, the effects of the virus are unpredictable. There are exceptions that happen, and children can become very ill and need hospital care. Vaccination is the best way to protect children from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Before it was authorized for children across age groups, medical experts reviewed safety and effectiveness data from clinical trials involving thousands of children. Common side effects reported were redness and soreness at the injection site. Rare side effects include myocarditis, inflammation of the heart muscles, which can cause fatigue and chest pain. This was reported mainly in adolescents and was temporary.

Fact sheets with more information to help parents understand the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccines are available on swhealth.ne.gov or at SWNPHD offices in McCook and Ogallala. Talk to your child’s healthcare provider if you have questions.

“Immunity from vaccines and prior infection goes down over time, so having a recent shot is very important,” continues Propp. “New variants are highly contagious; we need layers of protection to reduce our risk, and every layer helps. This includes lots of ventilation with fresh air, staying up to date on vaccinations, staying home if you’re sick, and wearing a mask if you’ve been exposed to COVID-19.”

For more information on COVID vaccines, 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 and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Call (308) 345-4223 one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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