

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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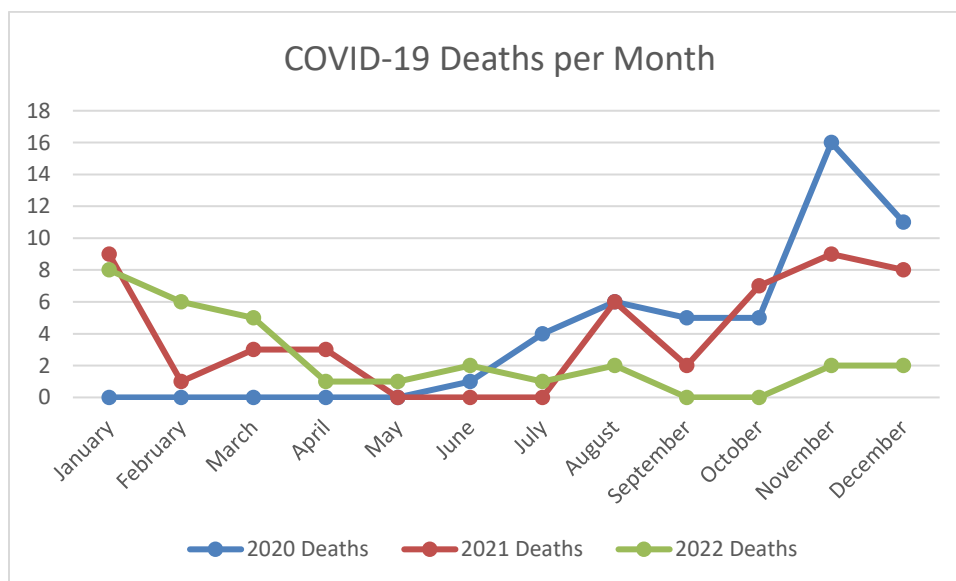
COVID-19 Report for February and March 2023

Six cases of COVID-19 were recorded in Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) in the past week (Apr 2 – Apr 8). There was a total of 208 cases reported in February and March 2023, with an average of 26 cases per week over 8 weeks. Most of these cases were detected in long term care facilities; actual case numbers were likely higher due to a wave of infections during February and March but due to low testing numbers in the district, actual rates of infection were not identified. Recent case counts have since been decreasing.

Three deaths due to COVID-19 were reported to SWNPHD in February. Also, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) reported an additional 7 deaths that occurred between February and December of 2022, bringing the total deaths due to COVID-19 in SWNPHD to 129.

Data on Deaths from COVID-19 in Southwest Nebraska:

- Most deaths occurred during the winter months of November, December, and January.
- 47% female, 53% male.
- Ages range from 17 years old to 105 years old.
- 8 out of 10 deaths were age 65 years or older.



DHHS State Epidemiologist Dr. Matthew Donahue and his team analyzed Nebraska-specific data to determine how well the updated COVID-19 booster shots prevented death. The analysis, released in March 2023, found that since September of 2022, Nebraskans who received the updated boosters were at 17 times lower risk of death compared with those who have not received the vaccine.

Nebraskans who received the original vaccine series were at two times lower risk of dying compared to those who have not received any COVID vaccine. Nebraskans who have not received a primary series are also 5 times more likely to be hospitalized for COVID-19 than those who completed two doses.

CHOOSE TODAY!
Get your booster vaccination against COVID-19 at your local pharmacy, doctor's office, or health dept.

VACCINATED WITHOUT UPDATED BOOSTER	VACCINATED WITH UPDATED BOOSTER
2x	17x
LOWER RISK OF DEATH	LOWER RISK OF DEATH

Over the last 20 weeks, people who were vaccinated **without an updated booster** were **2X** less likely to die from COVID-19 and people who were vaccinated **with an updated booster** were **17X** less likely to die from COVID-19 compared with people who were not vaccinated.

“While the pandemic emergency phase has passed and life in Nebraska returned to normal long ago, COVID-19 is still the third leading cause of death in the state,” said Dr. Donahue. The COVID-19 virus changes over time. The up-to-date vaccines include a component of the original virus strain and a component of the omicron variant to provide better protection against newer variants.

Anyone ages 6 months and older who have completed the primary series of COVID vaccine more than two months ago are eligible for an updated booster. These boosters are still free and can be found at your local pharmacy or at your local health department. If you need help finding an updated booster near you, call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Consider choosing today to protect your health in 2023 with an up-to-date booster shot.

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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