

Our Vision: Healthy People in Healthy Communities
Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, September 20, 2022
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COVID-19 bivalent boosters encouraged in all eligible ages to reduce transmission to others

Hastings, Neb – In the health department’s weekly health update on September 20, South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) executive director Michele Bever reported bivalent booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine are currently available in multiple locations across the health district. There are two products available: Pfizer, approved for ages 12 and above, and Moderna, approved for ages 18 and above.

“We have distributed doses of bivalent booster vaccine with our vaccine provider partners across the district so that residents can access the vaccine within the county where they live or work,” Bever said. “It is important to stay up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccine boosters for two reasons. First, getting the booster reduces the risk of getting seriously ill, which can lead to the need for hospital care or death.”

“Second, new [research](#) shows that vaccination reduces transmission of the virus to others: vaccinated people are less likely to pass on Omicron than those who have not been immunized. According to the study, people who were vaccinated and also had a previous infection were even less likely to pass on Omicron,” she said.

“We continue to encourage those who are most at risk of severe illness to protect themselves by staying up-to-date on vaccine and getting their bivalent booster when they are eligible. We also encourage others to get up-to-date on their vaccinations to reduce overall spread of the virus in the community,” she said.

To be eligible for the bivalent booster, individuals must have completed the primary series shots and be at least 2 months out from their last COVID-19 primary or booster shot. Since bivalent booster vaccine is limited initially, interested residents may call South Heartland to get their name on a list for the Moderna or Pfizer bivalent booster at South Heartland’s Allen’s clinic. Residents should check the SHDHD webpage, southheartlandhealth.ne.gov, for updates on which other locations in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties are carrying the bivalent COVID-19 vaccines and how to make appointments or get on a list at each location.

Bever noted that doses of bivalent COVID-19 vaccine are still limited and that arrival dates for the next shipments had not yet been confirmed. “We are expecting more Pfizer doses this week, but the next Moderna doses may not arrive for a couple of weeks,” she said. “We encourage people to get whichever product is available, regardless of which product you had previously. It is safe and effective to switch products,” she said.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), getting vaccinated and staying up-to-date on COVID vaccination is the most important and effective way to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>). The bivalent COVID-19 vaccines are mRNA vaccines that were created to build more specific immunity against the more recent variants of the virus that cause COVID-19.

For locations offering COVID-19 vaccine or COVID-19 tests, refer to the SHDHD website, southheartlandhealth.ne.gov or call the health department office, 1-877-238-7595. For weekly state,

national and global COVID-19 updates, visit the UNMC Global Center for Health Security:
<https://www.unmc.edu/healthsecurity/health-emergencies/covid19-updates.html>.

SHDHD COVID-19 dashboard update on 09.20.2022:

- 28 confirmed COVID-19 cases logged last week compared to 40 the week before
- 16 confirmed cases counted in the current week through Tuesday
- Long-term Care Facilities: 3 facilities with staff and/or residents testing positive in the past 2 weeks
- Hospitals: 3 patients hospitalized due to COVID as of 09/20/22
- Case rate is still “Substantial”: 62 cases per 100,000 for the past 7 days on 09.20.22 (100 or more cases per 100K in 7 days is considered High)
- Community weekly positivity: 28% for the week ending 09/17/22 (10% is considered High)
- Testing for last week decreased by 49% over the previous week. Testing does not include results from at-home tests, which are not included in the case counts and are not required to be reported to the health department.
- Cumulative case total for the health district: 11,268 since March 2020
- Most current Nebraska [genomic surveillance report](#) shows that 88% of the circulating virus is BA.5.
- Most current Nebraska [wastewater surveillance report](#) shows “very high” virus levels for Hastings.
- Other South Heartland District COVID-19 trends may be found on [SHDHD’s COVID-19 dashboard](#) at southheartlandhealth.ne.gov

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