

## **News Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

July 22, 2024

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### **Hepatitis A is Preventable**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages all persons 1 year of age and older to make sure they are vaccinated against Hepatitis A. Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable liver infection that is very contagious and is often spread unknowingly to others. Each year cases of hepatitis A are seen throughout the United States and the world.

“Hepatitis A can be spread through person to person contact or by foods or beverages that are contaminated with the Hepatitis A virus,” states Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager at SWNPHD. “We often hear about people being exposed to Hepatitis A after having eaten at a restaurant where one of the employees was infected with Hepatitis A while they were working and handling food.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the hepatitis A virus is found in the stool and blood of people who are infected. Symptoms of Hepatitis A include nausea, fatigue, stomach pain and jaundice. Most people who get infected with Hepatitis A do not have long lasting illness; however, some people feel ill for as long as 6 months.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent Hepatitis A. There is a two-dose series of shots given 6 months apart that provides lifelong protection. SWNPHD recommends these shots for anyone aged 1 year and over. This vaccine is also strongly recommended for anyone traveling outside of the United States, as water treatment and food safety can vary greatly from country to country.

Call your healthcare provider or visit one of SWNPHD’s public shot clinics to find out if you and your family are vaccinated for Hepatitis A. Locations and dates of shot clinics can be found at [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov). If you have questions about hepatitis shots or other immunizations, call Melissa Propp, RN Clinic Manager, 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, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov). Call (308) 345-4223 or stop by the office at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street in McCook.

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