

## News Release

### *For Immediate Release*

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Contact: Melissa Propp, RN, Clinic Manager, 308-345-4223

## RSV and Influenza

Respiratory virus season will be arriving soon. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and Influenza (flu) are common during the fall and winter months. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to get their RSV vaccinations and flu shots now.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a virus spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, from touching a surface contaminated with RSV, or by direct contact with someone who has RSV. Someone who is sick with RSV can spread the virus for 3-8 days and can start spreading the illness up to 2 days before symptoms start.

Most people will be infected with RSV during their first year of life, but anyone can get this virus. A mild infection and quick recovery are most common, but infants, some young children, and older adults are at risk of severe RSV and complications. Each year there are an estimated 58,000-80,000 children under the age of 5 that are hospitalized due to RSV.

### Who can get RSV vaccine:

- Adults 75 years of age or older.
- Adults 60 to 74 years old who have chronic heart or lung disease, weakened immune systems, live in a nursing home, or certain other medical conditions such as diabetes.
- Pregnant women can get a dose of the RSV vaccine at 32-36 weeks gestation to help protect herself and pass on immunity to the unborn baby.
- Infants whose mothers did not receive an RSV vaccine can get the RSV antibody which provides direct protection.
- Infants up to age 8 months.
- Children aged 8 months- 19 months who have underlying medical conditions such as chronic lung disease from being born preterm.

Influenza (flu) is another potentially fatal, contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu vaccines make it less likely that you will get the flu; if you do get the flu, it keeps your symptoms from becoming serious, lowering the risk of needing medical care or hospitalization. Everyone aged 6 months or older should have an annual flu shot.

For more information on how to protect your health during respiratory virus season, call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Follow

SWNPHD on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, or view the website at [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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