

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) IN MCPHERSON COUNTY

COVID-19 data in McPherson County can be found on the home page of mcpersoncountyks.us, under "McPherson County COVID-19 Dashboard." This data will continue to be updated Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. Public releases (like this one) will move to once a week on Thursdays and more frequently if needed.

McPherson County Health Department (MCHD) recognizes and is proud of McPherson County for continuing to practice critical safety measures to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Next week, MCHD is due to review reopening plans and recommendations for the county. We are considering McPherson County's population vaccinated rate, current trends with COVID-19 infection locally, statewide and nationally, and are consulting with local healthcare partners in order to decide what our next step is in the fight against COVID-19. Please stay tuned for next week's release to discuss these matters.

MCHD recommends McPherson County practice Phase 3 Reopening Plans beginning February 10, 2021 and will be reviewed April 6, 2021. Reopening plan guidance is shifting to include case and recovery rates and population vaccination status. Phase 3 limits gatherings to 45 individuals when 6-foot distance is not maintained. More information on Phase 3 plans can be found on the McPherson County website, mcpersoncountyks.us.

As of this release, McPherson County is vaccinating anyone 16 years old and above for COVID-19. You may call MCHD at 620-241-1753, your local healthcare provider, or pharmacy for an appointment. You may also search for locations using vaccinefinder.org. (16 and 17 year old individuals may only receive Pfizer vaccine at this time).

KDHE and MCHD continue to mandate a 10-day quarantine for Kansans if you have done any of the following:

- Traveled on or after March 26 to Delaware, Michigan, Rhode Island, Hungary or Jordan.
- Traveled on or after March 12 to New Jersey or New York
- Traveled on or after March 12 to State of Palestine or Estonia.
- Traveled on or after February 26 to the countries of Czechia, San Marino or Montenegro.
- Attended/traveled to a mass gathering event out-of-state of 500 people or greater where individuals did not 6-foot distance and wear masks.
- Traveled on a cruise ship or river cruise.

School Guidance: KDHE has adopted new CDC guidelines regarding masking and distancing in schools.

- Universal and correct use of masks should still be in place.
- In elementary schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart.
- In middle and high schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart unless there is high community transmission.
- If an outbreak occurs in any school setting, students should be 6 feet apart until the outbreak is contained.
- However, 6 feet distance must continue to be maintained in the following settings:
 - Between adults (teachers and staff) and between adults and students. Studies have found that transmission between staff is more common than transmission between students in schools.
 - When masks cannot be worn, such as eating.
 - During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band, sports, or exercise. These activities should be moved outdoors or to large, well-ventilated space when possible.
 - In common areas like school lobbies and auditoriums.

- Quarantine and isolation protocol has not changed. A close contact is defined as someone within 6-feet for 10 minutes or longer of a positive, infectious case.

Isolation and Quarantine:

- If you are exposed to someone with suspect or confirmed COVID-19, you are not required to quarantine if you meet ALL of the following points:
 - If you have been fully vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine for at least 2 weeks (2 weeks after the second dose in 2-dose series like Moderna and Pfizer, or 2 weeks after the first dose in a single-dose vaccine like Johnson & Johnson)
 - If you are within 6 months of receiving your last dose in the vaccine series
 - If you are not having any symptoms since the identified COVID-19 exposure
- If you do not meet ALL of the above points, you should follow normal quarantine guidance, which includes a 10-day quarantine from date of exposure.
- If you meet ALL of the above points but then become symptomatic, you should immediately isolate and seek PCR or antigen COVID-19 testing.
- Vaccinated inpatients and residents in healthcare settings/long term care facilities are exempt from this fully vaccinated exemption due to unknown vaccine effectiveness in this population, the higher risk of severe disease and death, and challenges with distancing in these settings.