



May 3, 2021

For immediate release

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Regional West Health Services' Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruner shares on Monday briefing, "Don't be afraid of it, the vaccines are safe."

Dr. Matthew Bruner, OB/GYN and Chief Medical Officer at Regional West Health Services based in Scottsbluff joined the regular Monday briefing to discuss COVID vaccines and answer questions from attendees. Bruner has been involved regionally and statewide in COVID response and addressed an array of misconceptions and information circulating.

One misconception has been commonly shared around the vaccine causing infertility.

"We've seen people into their second trimester who have received the vaccine prior to pregnancy. The concern has been debunked and this has been affirmed by reproductive endocrinologists," said Dr. Bruner.

As a freedom-loving American, he believes people are able to make their own decisions, but those decisions involve the safety of the person and the safety of the population which is improved with vaccinations.

When asked about encouraging older people to get the vaccine, Dr. Bruner relayed the importance of weighing the risk and benefits. Some people find that 24-36 hours of potentially not feeling good is not worth it but what they don't realize is this could keep them from having a very serious bout of COVID. Potential side effects are true with getting your shingles, whooping cough, and measles shots as well.

While he acknowledged the reluctance, he shared the importance of more people needing to get the COVID shot, or we must continue with social distancing and masking as it just prolongs the pandemic.

"The vaccines are safe and the ability of the vaccine to cover the disease is excellent. I encourage everybody to take the leap and get the vaccination. Finish the course, don't skip it just with one [specific to a two-dose series]. Don't be afraid of it, patients that we have seen recently in medical care have been unvaccinated individuals," Dr. Bruner concluded.

Ample COVID vaccine supply and appointments are available. Panhandle residents 18 and older can self-schedule with two easy steps:

- Register on the vaccinate.ne.gov website.
- For the corresponding counties, pick a location, day, and time that works for you. Dates and times will be added to the links as they are made available.
 - **Box Butte/Grant:** <https://tinyurl.com/25mwaapu> or [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com)
 - **Cheyenne/Deuel:** <https://tinyurl.com/5b5uac8p>, [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com), or [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com)
 - **Dawes/Sioux:** <https://tinyurl.com/x5d5nnbn>, [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com), or [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com)
 - **Garden:** sign up at vaccinate.ne.gov – a provider will call you
 - **Kimball:** <https://tinyurl.com/d2u8txrs>
 - **Morrill:** <https://tinyurl.com/sb8mvumm>
 - **Sheridan:** <https://tinyurl.com/cvrmkv38>
 - **Scottsbluff/Banner:** <https://tinyurl.com/w6b84fkf>, [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com), or [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com)

The two steps are encouraged to ease the vaccine process. There is no charge for the vaccine. Pfizer will be coming soon to the Panhandle. Teens ages 16 & 17 can register now at vaccinate.ne.gov. For the Moderna shot, the second dose is needed to produce the best immunity results.

People who are fully COVID vaccinated will not be required to quarantine due to close contact. If you have lost your COVID vaccine card, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2zh7uhhu>.

Unified Command confirms 20 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Monday, April 26. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

All Ages: 20	
County	Cases
Banner	0
Box Butte	2
Cheyenne	6
Dawes	0
Deuel	2
Garden	1
Grant	0
Kimball	0
Morrill	2
Scotts Bluff	2
Sheridan	5
Sioux	0

Exposure Type	
Community	40%

Close Contact	25%
Travel	0%
Under Investigation	35%

March 2, 2020-May 3, 2021

- **Total Tests Conducted: 38,191**
- **Positive: 9,020**
- **Last 14 days (active) cases: 31**
- **Last week's cases: 20**
- **Last week's positivity rate: 5.3%**
- **Deaths: 191**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 2**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 546**
- **Doubling time (November 15, 2020 – May 3, 2021): 169 days**

Avoid the Three Cs:

- **Avoid Crowded Places** – Avoid gathering in groups where you cannot maintain 6-foot of distance from others
- **Avoid Close Contact** – Wear a mask over your nose and mouth or maintain 6-foot distance when you are spending more than 15 total minutes with people you don't live with
- **Avoid Confined Spaces** – Avoid enclosed spaces with poor ventilation

Current COVID testing access can be found at www.pphd.org.

The Panhandle COVID dashboard is now being updated on Mondays only prior to the 3:30pm MT briefing and available at www.pphd.org. For the most up to date information from the CDC, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Panhandle Public Health District, Region 21, 22, and 23 Emergency Management, and Scotts Bluff County Health Department are working as a unified command on this evolving situation. Essential updates will be regularly communicated to the public and community partners.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community. Visit our website www.pphd.org.