

320 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Suite B  
Winfield, KS 67156  
Phone: (620) 221-1430  
Fax: (620) 221-0389



City-Cowley County  
Health Department

115 E. Radio Lane  
Arkansas City, KS 67005  
Phone: (620) 442-3260  
Fax: (620) 442-1759

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Contact: Thomas Langer  
Cowley County Public Health Officer  
Health Department Administrator  
620-221-1430  
Email: [tlanger@cowleycounty.org](mailto:tlanger@cowleycounty.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 15, 2021

### **County Wide COVID-19 Update**

The City-Cowley County Health Department monitors the health of county residents. The following is a weekly update to inform the community of the current status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cowley County.

October cases to date are down by twenty percent (20%) when compared to the first 15 days of September 2021 (248 vs 297). The majority of new cases continue to be found in families with children and strongly suggest the spread is a result of the social interactions of students. The Delta variant has had a profound impact on the population under the age of 18. During 2020 the school aged population was largely spared infection, in 2021 that has not been the case. Since August 1, 2021 thirty-nine percent (39%) of new cases in the county (353/895) have occurred in persons aged 18 and under.

#### **LOCAL SCHOOLS:**

The health and safety of children in our community remains our highest priority. In order for children to be in school they must be healthy. Everyone remains in agreement that families want children to be in school in person and benefit from classroom learning. We need everyone to work together to make sure that the school year is successful. Local school districts are continuing to work to minimize the spread of all illnesses especially COVID-19 by conducting screening and testing daily. Please remember to not send a sick child to school for any reason. If a family member becomes ill with COVID-19 every family member **MUST** quarantine if they are not vaccinated or have natural immunity from a previously documented case of COVID-19. The ill person(s) **MUST** isolate for a minimum of 10 (ten) days.

You should always contact the Health Department or your local physician for specific guidance about how to deal with the illness in your home. The most important thing to remember is to not spread the illness to others.

The same care and process must be followed if you have a child in daycare.

#### **COVID-19 TESTING:**

If you develop symptoms of illness of any kind you are encouraged to be tested. The Health Department continues to offer rapid antigen testing in our daily drive-up lane. The antigen test detects proteins from the virus that causes COVID-19 which are present in the respiratory system. Test results are generally available within 15 minutes following sample processing.

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Results of the tests are transmitted to people through a text message or an email. These tests are quick and a good tool to identify people with illness. We will also continue to offer PCR testing which is more sensitive and definitive in confirming the presence of COVID-19. If you have illness symptoms and need testing please call the office and we will provide you details for when the testing lane will be open each day.

**COWLEY COUNTY ILLNESS REPORT BY THE NUMBERS:**

The positivity rate for the last week was 11.75% which is up from the 8.4% of the previous week. This continuing fluctuation (movement up and down) is not uncommon. We anticipate that it will continue but hope that we will not experience larger and larger new case numbers.

A comparison of the overall rates of infection in the non-vaccinated and vaccinated populations (see table below) illustrates the significant trend in illness spread.

Since March 31, 2021	Number of Cases	Percent of total
All cases	1612	100%
Vaccinated (break through)	141	8.7%
Non-Vaccinated	1471	91.3%

Month to month new case information is presented numerically in the tables below:

Month/Year	New Cases
April 2021	47
May 2021	56
June 2021	28
July 2021	<b>153</b>
August 2021	<b>488</b>
September 2021	<b>592</b>
October 2021* to date	<b>248</b>

COVID-19 Break through Cases	
May	2
June	2
July	25
August	50
September	45
October	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>141</b>

BT Cases by Age	
12-18	5
19-35	19
36-60	56
60+	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>

BT Cases by Vaccine	
Moderna	75
Pfizer	45
Janssen	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>

Since the start of the pandemic, 5521 Cowley County residents have been confirmed as positive for COVID-19. One (1) additional death occurred in Cowley County last week. One hundred twenty-four (124) Cowley County residents have died from complications related to COVID-19 infection since March of 2020.

Cowley County, along with all counties in Kansas, remains identified as an area where infection is considered widespread. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has updated their

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reporting of the ongoing pandemic for the state and individual counties including weekly county rankings. You can visit their website for more data:

<https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/160/COVID-19-in-Kansas> .

### **OTHER COVID-19 NEWS:**

This week the CDC recommended approval to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for booster doses for previously vaccinated people for both Moderna mRNA and Jensen (J&J) vaccines. It appears that boost doses will vary in timing and concentration by vaccine. The Health Department will make that information available as soon as all the approvals and guidance has been released.

The Pfizer mRNA vaccine in pediatric doses for children ages 5 to 12 is currently under review. When these are approved, we will request those vaccines and make them available for families wishing to vaccinate children. These vaccines will also be smaller in concentration than adult doses.

In other COVID-19 prevention and treatment news, more data and consideration are being given to support the use of additional anti-viral medications that may already exist or are in development. These antivirals when made available would be used in the early treatment for new COVID-19 cases. Additional information about these changes or developments will be shared by the Health Department as it becomes available.

As always the Public Health Officer IS NOT issuing nor enforcing any type of local vaccination mandates. Locally our role remains the same. We will continue to provide current public health advice about local conditions relating to illness within the County.

As the Public Health Officer, I highly endorse the use of vaccines to prevent and stop the spread of illness. I am happy to talk to anyone about their concerns of any vaccine and explain the reasons I believe the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. While I support the use of vaccines, I will respect, and take into consideration the decisions of individuals. The virus does not listen to news reports or follow social media. The virus does not discriminate and knows no political ideology. It will continue to evolve and seek out a host that is unprotected in order to spread. Current data indicates a strong correlation that indicates that if you are not vaccinated your risk of infection from COVID-19 is significantly higher than if you were vaccinated. I hope that you look at what is happening locally and base your decisions about your health, including vaccinations, on those facts.

### **PERSONAL CARE AND ILLNESS PREVENTION:**

Nearly 400 local residents took advantage of the local drive through flu shot clinics during the past two weeks. The Health Department urges everyone to roll up the sleeve and take this vaccine to reduce the rate of illness in the County. Prevention is priority one for us in this realm.

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Remember your individual health status is vital in combating illness of all kinds. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle includes eating nutritious foods, maintaining a healthy body weight, staying physically active, drinking plenty of water and getting adequate rest.

For as long as the pandemic persists Cowley County residents are advised to take all necessary precautions to prevent the contraction and spread of ANY illness.

- Stay home if you feel ill.
- If you develop any symptoms of illness, be tested to determine if you are infected and to seek medical help.
- Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer.
- Wear a mask in enclosed places if required to do so or if you so desire.
- Avoid crowds and large social gatherings if you believe those settings are a risk for you.
- You **MUST** stay home and isolate from others if you are ill so you will not spread the virus or any other illness to others.
- Please be kind and respectful of others.

We will issue an update next Friday afternoon October 22, 2021.

Stay well.