

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

---

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  
September 3, 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.

The start of the 2021 school year is showing a stark difference to 2020 when COVID related illness seemingly bypassed children. This year that is definitely not the case. Local school districts are experiencing the effects of viral spread in congregant settings (schools). Districts are experiencing numerous absences in all grade levels. The health and safety of the children in our community is our highest priority, we want them to be in school in person to benefit from classroom learning, we all must work together to make sure that the school year is successful.

Absences are caused when a student comes to school ill and is then discovered to have COVID-19. The student (and any siblings) is immediately excluded and must isolate and quarantine with family members for the prescribed observation and recovery periods. It does not stop there. Unfortunately, many additional students and families can be impacted if they had close contact with an ill student. The resulting large-scale quarantine requirements (full classrooms in some situations) are causing many families to miss work and children to miss school for extended periods of time. These absences can be avoided if people act responsibly. DO NOT send a child to school if the child has ANY symptoms of illness. Instead have the student tested to determine if they have COVID-19. Testing is easy to get, and results can be provided in very short time spans. The Health Department is working with schools on testing plans to help keep kids in schools. Watch for more information in the near future on this issue. It should also be mentioned that the same caution must be taken if you have a child in daycare.

This week the Health Department began offering 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. 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. We are offering this service in conjunction with the expanded testing that will occur during the upcoming Walnut Valley Festival as a way to help keep everyone safe.

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

New reports out this week provided insight to who is vaccinated in Cowley County. Data indicates that nearly 70% of our population aged 65 and over have been fully vaccinated. Overall, 44% of our population over 12 years of age has been vaccinated. The numbers are improving slowly but we still have a long way to go to achieve widespread immunity within the population. Expect continued spread within the entire population but especially in the non-vaccinated population.

Currently in Cowley County COVID-19 between 100 to 150 tests are being performed each day. On average 10 to 15 new cases are found each day. This rate has remained level for the past three (3) weeks. We continue to average nearly 100 active cases daily in the county.

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	816	100%
Vaccinated (break through)	84	10.0%
Non-Vaccinated	732	90.0%

Month to month new case information is presented numerically in the table 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* to date	<b>44</b>

As of today 117 Cowley County residents have died from complications related to COVID-19 infection.

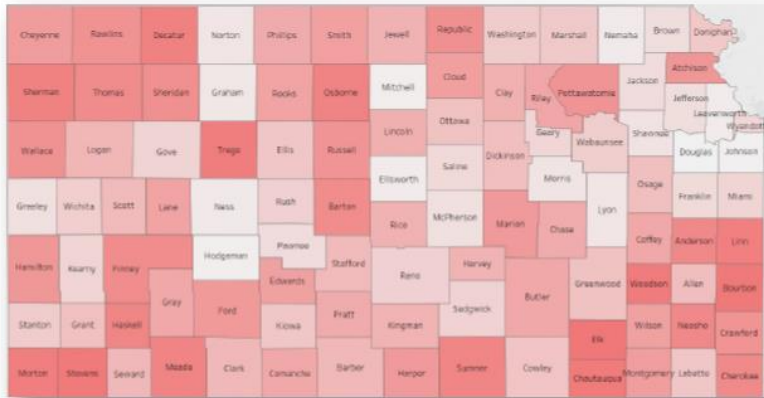
Cowley County, along with all counties in Kansas, remains identified as an area where infection is currently widespread. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has updated their reporting of the ongoing pandemic for the state and individual counties including weekly county rankings. You can visit their website for more data:

<https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/160/COVID-19-in-Kansas> . An excerpt from that report is presented below in a gradient map format. You are encouraged to explore the weekly report on your own.

## Kansas County COVID Rankings | County Ranking Map

### COVID Ranking Map

As of 9/1/21



Ranking Legend



1. [CDC Level of Transmission Map](#), [CDC Mask Guidance](#)  
 Source: CDC, KDHE, NYT

### Key insights

- Kansas has full vaccination ~57% of the eligible population (12+) ranking 28th nationally, but within Kansas there is significant variation by county
- Currently, the CDC<sup>1</sup> indicates that **103/105 (98%) counties in Kansas** are at a "high" or "substantial" risk of transmission, reinforcing the need for local leaders to engage
- County COVID rankings will be fluid over time, we expect to see change in hot spot counties where case growth rates are high
- Report will be updated 3x per week and available on the [KDHE website](#)

All Cowley County residents are advised to take all necessary precautions to prevent the contraction and spread of 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 are also reminded that you **MUST** stay home and isolate from others if you are ill. Please do not go out and spread the virus or any other illness further. Please be kind and respectful of others.

The virus does not discriminate. The virus knows no political ideology. It will seek out a host that is unprotected in order to spread. Current data continues to indicate that if you are not vaccinated your risk of infection with COVID-19 is significantly higher than if you were vaccinated. We strongly urge you to get vaccinated to protect your health.

**THE CHOICE IS YOURS**, and we respect your decision.

We will update this report next Friday September 10, 2021.