



Press Release
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Flu and COVID-19 Shots Urged Ahead of Upcoming Holidays

Now is the time to protect yourself and your loved ones before holiday gatherings.

PECOS, Texas (Nov. 19, 2021) – The holiday season is upon us, and many of us have plans to gather with family and friends to celebrate. This year, vaccinations are more important than ever to keep loved ones safe from the flu and COVID-19.

“Spending time with the people you care about has always been a pillar of the holiday season, and I hope that all of you get the chance to do so in a safe manner,” says Brenda McKinney, CEO of Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD). “This year, however, getting both the flu and COVID-19 shot is essential to protecting yourself and everyone around you.”

Flu vaccines in the U.S. are quadrivalent (four-component) this year, meaning they are designed to protect against the four flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to spread and cause illness among people during the 2021-2022 flu season.

When it comes to vaccinations against the flu, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone ages six months and older get vaccinated.

While the flu continues to be an annual threat, research and statistics have shown that coronavirus is more lethal, causing the death of more than 754,000 Americans since the pandemic began. The CDC estimates upwards of 62,000 flu deaths across the United States in the 2019-2020 flu season.

In early 2021, vaccines designed to protect individuals against the potentially deadly virus became mainstream. In the months following initial vaccinations, additional research shows that booster shots can effectively increase protection.

“Many in our community have already been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus,” McKinney says. “For some in vulnerable groups, a booster shot may provide additional protection and keep them safe.”

Individuals who previously received a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine may be eligible for a booster shot six months or more after receiving their second shot.

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Eligible groups for a booster shot include individuals ages 65 years and older or 18 and older who live in a long-term care setting, have underlying medical conditions, or live or work in a high-risk setting.

For those who previously received a Johnson and Johnson one-dose COVID-19 vaccine, booster shots are recommended for individuals ages 18 and older who received their original shot two or more months ago.

When it comes to COVID-19 vaccines for children and teens, the CDC recommends that everyone ages five and older be vaccinated against the coronavirus. At the time of print, only the Pfizer vaccine is recommended for children and teens over five.

Statistics show that COVID-19 symptoms tend to be milder in children than adults, but it is still possible for children to become very sick and even be hospitalized. In some situations, complications from infection can also lead to death among infected children. As with adults, children with underlying medical conditions are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

“The health and safety of our community continue to be the top priority at RCHD,” McKinney underscores. “Especially during the holiday season, we hope that you consider getting your flu and COVID-19 vaccines.”

All COVID-19 vaccines, whether taken for the first or second time, including boosters, are free. High-dose flu vaccines are available for individuals aged 65 and older are available for \$50. Regular dose flu vaccines are available for \$25. Individuals with egg allergies can receive a special flu vaccine for \$50. Private insurance is accepted for flu shots during in-office clinic visits.

For more information on availability and to make an appointment for a flu shot, please call the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic at 432-447-0565.

About Reeves County Hospital District

Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) provides healthcare services for people in Reeves County and neighboring communities in West Texas. Founded in 1954, RCHD, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers a wide variety of medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic radiology, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory, and more. RCHD also operates American Home Health and Hospice and the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, which offers family care, immunizations, and other medical services. For more information, please visit www.reevescountyhospital.com.

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