



Shawnee County Health Department

Shawnee County Health Department
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MEDIA RELEASE

Shawnee County Health Department Encourages Safe Holiday Celebrations Amidst COVID-19 Increases

Topeka, Kan. – Health officials understand that holiday traditions are important for families and children. The Shawnee County Health Department and health officials across Kansas are encouraging individuals to protect themselves and their families amidst increases in COVID-19 cases and the emergence of the Omicron variant in several communities. There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and protect your health.

In order to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov) recommends taking the following precautions:

- **Get vaccinated and boosted.** Vaccines remain the best tool to protect people from COVID-19, slow transmission and reduce the likelihood of new variants emerging. The three authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing serious illness, hospitalizations and death and scientists expect they will also prevent serious illness, hospitalizations and death in people infected with the Omicron variant. COVID-19 vaccines are now authorized for people ages 5 and over. The COVID-19 booster shots are authorized for people ages 16 and over.
- **Get tested.** Even if someone is not showing symptoms, they can still spread the virus. Protect your loved ones by getting tested for COVID-19 before spending the holidays with friends and family.
- **Wear a mask.** It is recommended that you wear a well-fitting mask over your nose and mouth in public indoor settings, even if you are fully vaccinated. If you or someone you are celebrating with has a weakened immune system, is at an increased risk for severe disease or is unvaccinated, wear a mask while gathering as an added precaution.
- **Take travel precautions.** It is recommended to delay travel until you are fully vaccinated. Whether you are fully vaccinated or not, it is important to know the travel recommendations and restrictions before your trip. For information about domestic and international travel guidance for fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, visit the [CDC's Travel page](https://www.cdc.gov/travel).

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Shawnee County Health Department is committed to working in partnership with our community to promote and protect the optimal health of all people by bridging gaps to eliminate health inequities, respecting the diversity of our community, through adaptive and innovative processes.

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