

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

### Teton County Health Department Recommendations and Next Steps with COVID-19

**February 15, 2022, Jackson, WY** – As cases continue to decline from Teton County’s Omicron surge, the Teton County Health Department would like to provide guidance to the community to help protect those who are most vulnerable to severe COVID-19 disease or death, including individuals age 50+, the immunocompromised, individuals with other underlying health conditions, and the unvaccinated. We understand that many people in our community feel differently today about their individual risk tolerance to COVID-19 than they did even a month ago. We want to provide information on specific protective measures to assist our most vulnerable community members and their families in making choices to help keep them safe.

For those in our community who are more vulnerable- and their families, neighbors, friends, or coworkers- there are still many protective measures that can be used in a layered approach to provide additional protection. We suggest what epidemiologists refer to as the “Swiss Cheese Model”. This is a multifaceted approach recognizing that each protective strategy has holes or weak spots, but by layering multiple protective strategies together, the overall risks are significantly reduced. These include:

- 1. COVID-19 Vaccines and Boosters-** This is one of the best interventions to protect yourself from severe COVID-19 disease and death. Currently, those 12+ are eligible for a booster of the COVID-19 vaccine. Booster doses are important to help overcome waning protection. Booster doses are especially important for those who are more vulnerable to severe COVID-19 disease and death - including those 50+, those who are immunocompromised, and those with other underlying health conditions. Although many in our community also have natural immunity to COVID-19 from the Omicron surge, it is recommended that those who have recovered from COVID-19 still receive a COVID-19 vaccine to provide additional more long-lasting protection to SARS-CoV-2. Information on Teton County’s COVID-19 vaccine clinic can be found at [www.tetoncountywy.gov/covidvax](http://www.tetoncountywy.gov/covidvax).
- 2. High-Quality Masks-** Continuing to wear a mask in crowded indoor areas. It is recommended to wear a N95 or KN95 mask even if others are not wearing a mask. Wearing the best quality mask you can find is one of the easiest protective measures you can take.
- 3. Rapid COVID-19 Testing (Including Antigen Tests)-** Rapid Tests including antigen tests are one way vulnerable individuals can feel more comfortable socializing with friends and family. It is recommended to have all parties test before getting together with their vulnerable friend or family member to ensure that no one is infectious for COVID-19. Antigen tests can be found online for purchase and every home in the U.S. now has access to 4 free antigen

tests. The free antigen tests can be ordered at <https://www.covidtests.gov/>. Other testing options in our community can be found at [www.tetoncountywy.gov/testing](http://www.tetoncountywy.gov/testing).

**4. Evusheld, a preventative drug for COVID-19-** Evusheld has now been authorized for use by the FDA. This particular drug works by providing an additional layer of protection to those who may not have had a robust immune response from the COVID-19 vaccine because they are immunocompromised. This drug should be taken before being exposed to COVID-19 and lasts 6 months at a time. Individuals should speak to their healthcare provider to see if they are eligible.

**5. Treatments When Infected (Including antivirals and other outpatient treatments)-** These treatments are used to help reduce the severity of COVID-19 for those who are the most vulnerable. They are most effective when used as soon as possible after the onset of someone's COVID-19 symptoms. Community members can utilize rapid testing to more quickly know if they have contracted COVID-19 and get connected with these different treatments if they are eligible.

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