

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Paula Callahan, Program Manager at 308-345-4223 or email: paula@swhealth.ne.gov

Handwashing is Key to Good Health

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages everyone to review how well they wash their hands. Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps to take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands well with soap and clean running water, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

You should wash your hands any time they are visibly dirty, and in the following situations: before, during, and after preparing food, before eating food, before and after caring for someone who is sick, before and after treating a cut or wound, after using the bathroom, after blowing your nose, after coughing or sneezing into your hands, after touching an animal, after handling pet food or pet treats, and after touching garbage.

Here is a reminder of the most effective way to wash your hands:

- 1) Wet your hands with warm water and add soap.
- 2) Rub your hands together, making sure to scrub all areas.
- 3) Scrub for a minimum of 20 seconds or sing/hum the Happy Birthday song twice.
- 4) Rinse thoroughly, then dry your hands on a clean towel.
- 5) Turn the faucet off with the towel, not your hand, to avoid picking up germs again.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. According to the CDC, hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

SWNPHD provides free handwashing posters on the website www.swhealth.ne.gov.

For more information or to schedule a handwashing demonstration, contact Paula at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Call (308) 345-4223; one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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