

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Handwashing is Key to Good Health

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is encouraging everyone to review how 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 with soap and clean running water. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related sicknesses and 1 and 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu.

“Young children learn by imitating the behaviors of adults in their lives,” states Paula Callahan, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “When you make handwashing part of your routine, you’re setting an example for your children to follow.”

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 microbes on them in most situations. If soap and water are unavailable, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. 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. To schedule a handwashing demonstration, contact Paula at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th (one block north of Arby’s) in McCook and 418 North Spruce in Ogallala. Information can also be found on Facebook and Instagram.

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