

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages women aged 21 and over to screen for cervical cancer. It is very important to get screened regularly because cervical cancer may not cause any signs or symptoms, especially in the early stages. An estimated 12,000 new cases of cervical cancer occur each year in the United States.

Cervical cancer is the most preventable female cancer with regular screening tests and follow-up. It also is highly curable when found and treated early. There are two tests that can help find it early:

- The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for cell changes on the cervix that can be treated, so that cervical cancer is prevented. The Pap test also can find cervical cancer early when treatment is most effective.
- The HPV test looks for Human Papilloma Virus—the virus that can cause cervical cancer. This test can detect many high-risk types of HPV even before there are visible changes to cervical cells.

Depending on your age, your doctor may recommend you have a Pap test, or an HPV test, or both tests together.

There is a vaccine available to help prevent cancers caused by the HPV virus. Some of the cancers that the HPV vaccine can help prevent include throat, cervical and rectal cancers. This vaccine has been routinely recommended starting at the age of 9- 26 years but now it can also be given to adults aged 27 – 45 years.

Through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS), SWNPHD works to increase cervical cancer screening in southwest Nebraska through a program called Health Hub. “This program educates women on preventive health screenings, offers assistance to get their screenings scheduled, and helps them progress toward healthy living,” states Lori Rowley RN, Health Hub Program Manager at SWNPHD.

Women with no health insurance or whose insurance does not cover preventive cancer

screenings can qualify for free screenings through the Every Woman Matters Program. Residents of Nebraska can pick up an application at SWNPHD or their local medical clinic.

For more information on cancer screenings or vaccinations, talk to the public health nurses at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, TikTok, You Tube and Instagram.

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