

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) encourages residents to thoroughly review their handwashing techniques. Keeping hands clean is critical to preventing illness and limiting the spread of germs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that numerous diseases and ailments are spread due to the lack of handwashing with soap and clean running water.

It is important to wash your hands in the following situations: before, during, and after preparing food; before eating; before and after caring for someone who is ill; before and after tending to a cut or wound; after using the restroom; after blowing your nose; after coughing or sneezing into your hands; after coming into contact with an animal; after handling pet food or treats; and after touching garbage.

Don't forget the best way to wash your hands:

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

Remember that 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 offers free handwashing lessons for children in daycare through fourth grade. Effective handwashing can reduce illness and decrease absenteeism.

For more information or 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 SWNPHD's Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

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