

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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SWNPHD Celebrates Global Handwashing Day on October 15

October 15 is Global Handwashing Day, a great opportunity to remind people of all ages that proper handwashing is one of the simplest ways to help prevent the spread of germs and illness.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages everyone to celebrate by demonstrating proper handwashing, reminding others to wash their hands when needed, and making hand hygiene part of their daily routine. A friendly reminder can go a long way in helping protect families, schools, workplaces, and communities.

“When in doubt, wash your hands!” says Paula Wimer, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “Regular handwashing helps remove germs that can make you and others sick. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol is a good alternative.”

Six Steps to Effective Handwashing

Follow these steps to wash your hands properly:

1. **Wet your hands** with clean, running water.
2. **Apply soap** after moving your hands out of the water.
3. **Scrub for at least 20 seconds.** Remember to clean the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep hands out of the water still.
4. **Rinse your hands** thoroughly under clean, running water.
5. **Dry your hands** with a clean towel or air dryer. If using a reusable towel, make sure it is washed or replaced regularly.
6. **Turn off the faucet** using a paper towel, then throw the paper towel in the trash.

Hand sanitizer can be used when a sink is unavailable, but it does not work as well on visibly dirty or greasy hands. Follow the product label, and wash with soap and water once you have access to a sink.

SWNPHD Partners With Nebraska Extension to Teach Handwashing

This school year, SWNPHD has partnered again with Nebraska Extension and Baleigh Lashley to provide handwashing education to children throughout the region. Teaching children proper handwashing techniques early helps build healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Presentations have already taken place at St. Patrick's School, Wauneta-Palisade Elementary, and Southern Valley Elementary. Upcoming presentations are scheduled at Hitchcock County Elementary, Dundy County Elementary, Imperial Daycare, Southwest Elementary, and Arapahoe Elementary.

Through these educational visits, SWNPHD and Nebraska Extension are working together to help students understand why handwashing matters and how they can take simple steps to protect themselves and those around them.

This Global Handwashing Day, take a moment to wash your hands properly, share what you know with someone else, and help keep your community healthy!

"When in doubt, wash your hands! It's a simple step that can make a big difference in helping prevent the spread of germs and keeping our communities healthy. We encourage everyone to practice proper handwashing and to kindly remind others to do the same," continued Wimer.

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, Instagram, YouTube, or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov, which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote, and protect health.

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