

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Polish Your Pearls for Dental Health

For Children’s Dental Health Month, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages parents to teach good dental habits and get regular dental care for their children. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommend that children visit their dentist no later than their first birthday and every six months after that. When children learn how to care for their teeth early in life, their families save on costs and prevent future problems.

“According to AAPD, tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood illness in the United States, and the most preventable of all health problems,” states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager for SWNPHD. “Tooth decay is 5 times more common than asthma and 20 times more common than diabetes. In Nebraska, 46% of children aged 3 to 5 already have dental decay.”

Polish Your Pearls is a grant-based dental program from SWNPHD that helps supplement regular dental visits to provide protection against cavities for infants and children through 6th grade. This program is available to local daycares, preschools, and schools to provide oral health screening, dental education, sealants, and application of fluoride varnish.

The fluoride varnish that is applied by Polish Your Pearls is a sticky, honey like material that is painted on the teeth with a small soft brush. This varnish can be applied 4 to 6 times per year to strengthen teeth and protect against cavities. Polish Your Pearls also provides children with education on proper brushing and flossing.

Proper Brushing

- Tilt your toothbrush and put the bristles next to your gum line. The bristles should touch both the tooth and the gumline.
- Use a gentle vibrating movement to brush the outside surfaces 2 to 3 teeth at a time. Be sure to brush both sides of the teeth!
- Tilt the brush up and down behind the front teeth. Make up and down strokes using the bristle side of the brush.
- Brush the tongue from back to front to get rid of odor-producing bacteria.

Having your child participate in the Polish Your Pearls dental program can save money and help prevent problems. All children who participate in the program will receive a free dental screening, toothbrush, and toothpaste. A note is also sent home with your child showing the screening results. Those interested in knowing more about the program or wanting to set up a dental clinic should contact Sarah Minnick at SWNPHD 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, You Tube, TikTok 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.