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For Immediate Release  
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### **Handling Holiday Stress**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to make time to care for themselves during the busy holiday season. Holidays can be stressful, and for those with chronic conditions it is important to manage stress to avoid worsening health problems.

Not all stress is bad, but when the stress is too intense or lasts too long it has a negative impact on health. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), chronic stress has been shown to increase the risk of diseases like heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. Stress can also cause flare-ups of chronic conditions and can weaken the immune system.

#### **Tips for Handling Stress**

- Take care of your body – make a goal to eat some healthy foods and get active for a few minutes each day.
- Read stories of hope and recovery.
- Write about your feelings in a journal or diary or write a letter to yourself.
- Connect with friends, family, or community organizations.
- Take breaks from social media and news stories.
- Make time to unwind and do activities you enjoy to restore your energy.

Region 2 Human Services has web and mobile tools to help build mental health and stay strong. My Strength is a safe and secure mental wellness app that is provided at no cost to Nebraskans living in the Region 2 service area. To set up an account, go to [r2hs.com](http://r2hs.com) and click the My Strength tab. The app provides help for stress, anxiety, substance use, chronic pain and more.

If you are experiencing a crisis or having thoughts of suicide, call or text the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, suicide prevention, and crisis resources. Call, text, or chat 988, and be connected to trained counselors that are part of the Lifeline network. These trained counselors will listen, understand, provide support, and connect to resources if necessary.

For more information call 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 SWNPHD on Facebook and Instagram or call 308-345-4223, one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.