

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Polish Your Pearls Dental Program

Polish Your Pearls is a grant-based dental program from Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) that helps supplement regular dental visits to provide optimal protection against cavities for children ages 0-5. This program is available to local daycares and preschools to provide oral health screening, dental education, and application of fluoride varnish.

“According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (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 3-5 already have dental decay.”

It is now recommended by AAPD 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. Polish Your Pearls provides education including 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 gum line.
- Use a gentle vibrating movement to brush the outside surfaces 2-3 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. The fluoride varnish applied is a sticky, honey like material that is applied to the teeth with a small soft brush. This varnish can be applied 4-6 times per year and can decrease further cavity development by approximately 38%. 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 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.

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