

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager 308-345-4223

Hugh Butler Lake Health Notice

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has been notified of high levels of E. Coli at Hugh Butler Lake in Frontier County also known as Red Willow Reservoir. This means the water has a higher than usual number of bacteria, and residents should take extra care to not swallow any lake water.

“With the assistance of DHHS, we carefully monitor our lakes weekly during the summer for potential health risks,” explains Melissa Propp, Clinic Manager at SWNPHD. “When a lake has high E Coli levels, we recommend using caution around the water. If you are going to swim, make sure not to swallow water and don’t allow pets to drink the lake water.”

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), swimming during high E Coli levels can cause health issues. Young children should not be in the water at this point in time, since they are more susceptible to complications from E. Coli and other bacterial infections.

Symptoms can include abdominal cramps or pain, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fever, and loss of appetite, usually 3 or 4 days after exposure to the water. If you swam and are having these symptoms, contact your medical provider.

“Bacteria levels can change quickly and usually do not last long, depending on the conditions,” stated Propp. “You can check the Beach Watch website which is updated weekly by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE), from May through September.”

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. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote wellness, and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

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