

News Release



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For Immediate Release

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Alzheimer's Awareness in Southwest Nebraska

In recognition of Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month this June, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to learn about brain health, recognize the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease, and support individuals and families affected by dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that affects memory, thinking, and behavior. It is the most common cause of dementia and can make daily activities more difficult over time. While memory changes can happen as people age, significant memory loss that disrupts everyday life is not a normal part of aging.

According to DHHS in 2020, there were more than 35,000 Nebraskans living with Alzheimer's disease.

"Alzheimer's disease affects not only the individual but also family members, friends, and caregivers," said Mary Castillo, Program Manager at SWNPHD. "Learning the warning signs and talking with a healthcare provider when concerns arise can help people get the support and resources they need sooner."

Common warning signs of Alzheimer's disease may include:

- Memory loss that affects daily life
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Confusion with time or place
- Problems finding the right words
- Misplacing items and being unable to retrace steps
- Changes in mood, personality, or judgment

Although there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease, healthy lifestyle choices help support brain health. SWNPHD encourages residents to:

- Stay physically active
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Get enough sleep
- Stay socially connected
- Manage chronic health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease
- Challenge the brain through reading, puzzles, learning new skills, or other mentally stimulating activities

The Southwest Nebraska Dementia Coalition is bringing people together to collaborate on raising awareness of brain health as we age. The group will look for needs in our communities, enhance local resources, and share information about services that support healthy aging, brain health, and quality of life for older adults and their families. Anyone is welcome to join the coalition – contact Mary Castillo at 308-345-4223 or info@swhealth.ne.gov.

“Taking care of your brain is an important part of overall health,” Castillo said. “This month, we encourage everyone to learn more about Alzheimer’s disease, support caregivers, and take steps to protect their brain health throughout life.”

For more information about Alzheimer’s go to www.alz.org, call 800-272-3900, or contact 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, YouTube, 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.

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