

## NEWS RELEASE

October 20, 2026  
For Immediate Release  
Contact: Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager, 308-345-4223

### **October Is Dental Hygiene Month**

October is National Dental Hygiene Month, and Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) reminds individuals and families that healthy habits can make a lasting difference. Brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, cleaning between the teeth, making healthy food choices and getting regular dental visits are important parts of our health routine.

National Dental Hygiene Month is an opportunity to promote good oral health and recognize the important role dental hygienists play in prevention, education, and patient care. Dental hygienists are prevention specialists and oral-health educators who help people understand how daily habits can protect teeth and gums. They provide professional preventive care and help identify oral-health concerns that may require additional attention.

SWNPHD works with dental hygienists who have received a special public health endorsement to do their work in community settings. Through the Polish Your Pearls program, this team visits schools, daycares, and preschools to provide oral health screenings and connect them to dentists for further care. Over 1,100 children received services during the last school year.

“This month is a wonderful opportunity to recognize our dental hygienists and encourage everyone to make oral health a priority,” said Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “Small, consistent steps—such as brushing, flossing and keeping regular dental appointments—can contribute to healthier smiles and better overall well-being.”

SWNPHD encourages community members to use October as a reminder to schedule a dental checkup, review their daily oral-hygiene routine and talk with their dental team about questions or concerns.

For more information on dental hygiene visit [cdc.gov/oral-health](https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health). To sign up your school or daycare for Polish Your Pearls 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 us on Facebook, You Tube, and Instagram or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

###