

News Release

July 10, 2026

For Immediate Release

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

Plastic Free July

Every July, millions of people around the world participate in Plastic Free July, a global movement that encourages individuals, families, businesses, and communities to reduce their reliance on single-use plastics. The goal is to make small, sustainable changes every day that can add up to a healthier environment and healthier communities.

Here in Nebraska, those small changes can make a big difference. According to the Nebraska Recycling Council's 2019 State of Recycling Assessment, Nebraska recycles only about 17% of its municipal solid waste. That means more than 80% of recyclable materials, including many plastics, still end up in landfills instead of being recycled.

While recycling is important, reducing the amount of single-use plastic we use is even better. The less single-use plastic we use, the less waste we create in the first place. Reducing waste helps protect our air, land, and water—environmental factors that contribute to the health and well-being of everyone.

Fortunately, residents throughout southwest Nebraska have access to recycling opportunities. Because recycling programs vary by community, check with your local city office, county office, or waste management provider to learn what materials are accepted where you live.

"Public health is about creating healthy environments where people can live, work, and thrive," said Diana Garcia, Senior Program Manager at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. "Plastic Free July reminds us that small choices—like using a reusable water bottle, bringing reusable shopping bags, or choosing products with less plastic packaging—can make a meaningful difference for our communities."

Take the Plastic Free July Challenge

This July, challenge yourself to reduce your use of single-use plastics by choosing one new habit:

- Carry a reusable water bottle instead of purchasing bottled water.
- Bring reusable shopping bags when you shop.
- Choose reusable coffee mugs and food containers.
- Skip plastic straws and disposable utensils.
- Buy products with less plastic packaging.
- Recycle locally accepted materials after reducing and reusing whenever possible.

Remember the "Three Rs":

Reduce what you use.

Reuse whenever you can.

Recycle what remains.

Every small action counts. If every household in southwest Nebraska made just one simple change this month, together we could significantly reduce the amount of waste entering our landfills and help conserve valuable natural resources.

Ready to get started? This July, choose one simple way to reduce your plastic use and encourage your family, friends, or coworkers to join you. For information about recycling opportunities in your community, contact your local city office, county office, waste management provider, or Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department 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 and protect health. Follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

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