

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Every year on January 1, Panhandle residents make resolutions. *Quit smoking. Lose weight. Get healthy.*

Then every year by mid-January, many give up. They give up because quitting smoking, losing weight, and getting healthy are not easy tasks and we need support. Panhandle Public Health District is one resource in western Nebraska to make changing those three lifestyle areas easier.

“The three biggest risk factors for diabetes, heart disease, and cancer are no physical activity, poor nutrition, and smoking,” Jessica Davies, wellness coordinator at PPHD said. Focusing on a single goal can keep you from getting overwhelmed. And once you've tackled one, you'll feel motivated to keep the improvements going.

Get moving! Many local schools allow community members to use their gyms for early morning walking or running, some Panhandle communities have beautiful physical activity centers, and others have excellent trail systems well-maintained by city crews. Whatever your forte, “Just move it!”

Adults should be getting their daily dose of physical activity at least 30 minutes and children getting at least 60 minutes most days of the week. This can be done all at once or broken into segments completed throughout each day. Simply using your work breaks for brief bouts of exercise, parking further away from the store, and choosing the stairs instead of the elevator are all great ways to increase your daily activity levels.

Proper nutrition complements a physically active lifestyle. Simple changes in food choices can go a long ways-choose butter-free popcorn vs. chips, whole wheat bread vs. white, or have a side salad instead of French fries. Eat a variety of fruits and veggies each day whether they are fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice. Limit soda intake as well. It provides no nutritional value and should be replaced with water.

For those with a nicotine habit, Tobacco Free Nebraska offers the quit line, a toll free number 800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for smokers to call for immediate support. “Calls are answered by trained cessation counselors who give you a choice of services, including: telephone counseling; self-help materials; referrals to community programs; or a combination of these,” Tabi Prochazka, Tobacco Free in the Panhandle Coordinator with PPHD said.

“Tobacco Free Nebraska also has an online cessation support group and a texting service. Text IMREADY to 39649 for texts to help you keep on track,” Prochazka added.

So pick one goal and stick to it, don't try to make over every aspect of your life all at once. Be sure to tap into your social networks. Friends, family, and coworkers can provide a significant amount of support when working towards a behavior change. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council

is an excellent resource to help provide support for lifestyle wellness at the worksite. More information can be found at www.pphd.org/pwwc.html.

For more information visit www.pphd.org or call PPHD at 308-487-3600 or toll free at 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.