

Panhandle

Public Health District

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January 22, 2026

For immediate release

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February is Heart Health Awareness Month: Love Your Heart

February is American Heart Month, a time to spotlight heart disease, a leading cause of death both nationally and here in Nebraska, and encourage residents to adopt heart-healthy lifestyles.

Heart disease remains a significant health concern in Nebraska. According to recent data, heart disease accounted for about 20% of all deaths in the state in 2022, ranking it among the top causes of mortality for Nebraskans.

Local health data also shows that approximately 5% of Nebraska adults report ever being diagnosed with coronary heart disease or having had a heart attack, with rates higher among men than women, and CVD (cardiovascular disease) was responsible for nearly one in four deaths statewide in recent years. For more information about heart disease in Nebraska, visit <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/CVD-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

“Heart health affects everyone, young and old, and many of the risk factors are manageable,” said Tabi Prochazka, PPHD Assistant Director. “American Heart Month is an important reminder that small, sustainable changes can make a big difference in reducing the risk of heart disease and improving quality of life.”

Heart-Healthy Tips

While heart disease remains common, there are many evidence-based steps people can take to protect their heart health:

- **Know your numbers.** Monitor key health indicators such as blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar, and work with a healthcare provider to manage them.
- **Be active.** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week, like brisk walking, cycling, or dancing.
- **Eat heart-smart foods.** Choose meals rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats, and limit sodium, added sugars, and processed foods.
- **Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke.** Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease. Quitting at any age has immediate and long-term benefits for heart health.
- **Manage stress.** Chronic stress can negatively affect heart health. Try deep breathing, walks, time in nature, or other relaxation activities. <https://pphd.crediblemind.com/>
- **Get regular check-ups.** Routine screenings help detect risk early and guide preventive care.



- For more information about what you can do to manage your heart health please visit <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/aha-diet-and-lifestyle-recommendations>

Get Involved This Month

- National Wear Red Day: February 6: Wear red to raise awareness of heart disease, especially in women. Send a photo to Nicole at nberosek@pphd.ne.gov to be entered into a drawing.
- Learn life-saving skills: PPHD offers Stop the Bleed and CPR/First Aid classes upon request.
- Heart-healthy workshops: PPHD, in partnership with PWWC, provides workshops to support a heart-healthy lifestyle. For more info, contact Cheri Farris, cfarris@pphd.ne.gov or at 308-220-8020.
- Join the Living Well with High Blood Pressure Workshop to learn how to love your heart. Contact Cheri Farris, cfarris@pphd.ne.gov or at 308-220-8020.
- Local resources and events: Learn more at pphd.ne.gov.
- Additional support: Visit pphd.crediblemind.com and check out the latest PWWC newsletter [here](#)

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit www.pphd.ne.gov/pwwc.html or call Berosek at 308-279-3496. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District. The Council specializes in supporting employers in the Panhandle region. We recognize that many employers support a diverse and remote workforce and offer innovative ways to overcome the challenge of working with a virtual team. We understand that many of our employers do not have full-time wellness resources and work to provide resources and training to make running a worksite wellness program as easy as possible.

Did you see the latest PWWC newsletter? If not, check it out here: <https://pphd.ne.gov/pwwc.html>

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.