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Bike to Work Week: May 12-18

Janelle Visser, Panhandle Public Health District Injury Prevention Coordinator, encourages Panhandle residents to get out and bike or walk during the Bike to Work Week, May 12-18.

Visser states, "Biking or walking to work can be a fun and healthy way to start your day. It can provide many benefits such as brain power, fitness, and can be essential for our well-being. Bike to Work Week can inspire additional biking or walking all summer long."

Biking to work or school is a great way to get some activity on both sides of the day. Studies show swapping your gas-guzzling vehicle for a bike helps you break a sweat and gain mental health benefits. Plus, it's good for your pocket and the environment!

Western Nebraska Bicycle Club rep. Kristin Wiebe shared, "Be intentional and make plans to use your work commute to boost physical activity. The vantage point of a bicycle provides new views into your community."

She went on to say, "Planning a route ahead and knowing how much time it takes is key. Weather, darkness, and delays are the three factors to take time to account for each day. The commute should add joy to your day and not frustration. When you leave time for these unexpected circumstances, you're less likely to hurry and get into trouble."

Wiebe also recommends riding defensively to keep everyone safe, "Seeing drivers and having them see you can make all the difference in a busy intersection or stretch of road where motorists might be on autopilot."

What are the health benefits of biking to work or school?

- Riding a bike to work or school is a great way to boost your overall health.
- It's good for your heart and lungs.
- Biking improves balance and proprioception, your body's sense of movement.
- It can boost mental health and relieve stress.
- Biking to work also saves money.

What equipment do I need for commuting?

- Make sure the bicycle is properly sized and adjusted.
- Use a white headlamp and a red rear reflector for night riding.
- A rack over the rear wheel is convenient for carrying items such as books, a briefcase, or clothing.
- Carry a basic tool kit, tire patch kit and tire pump for those unexpected roadside repairs.
- Don't forget to have a blinking taillight and a headlight for early or late departures.

What are a few bicycle safety guidelines I should follow?

- Wear a bicycle helmet. It is the law for persons under 18 years of age.
- Ride with the traffic flow.
- Stop at stop signs and red lights.
- Wear bright clothing during the daytime.
- Ride to the right if you are moving slower than other traffic, unless you are turning left, passing another bicycle or vehicle, or avoiding hazards.
- Keep a safe distance from parked cars.
- Use proper hand signals when turning, stopping, or changing lanes.
- Cross railroad tracks at a right angle.
- Do not wear headphones on both ears while riding.
- Ride defensively.
- Obey all traffic signals.

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit the website or call Nicole Berosek at 308-279-3496. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District and 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.

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.

Sources: <https://momentummag.com/top-10-reasons-you-should-bike-to-work/>; <https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/bike-commuting-health-benefits>; <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/bike-program/bicycle-commuting-and-safety>;