

Panhandle

Public Health District

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October 23, 2025

For immediate release

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November is Diabetes Awareness Month: A Call to Action for Early Detection and Prevention

November is recognized as Diabetes Awareness Month, a time to highlight the critical importance of early detection, regular checkups, and glucose testing in managing and preventing diabetes. With nearly 1 in 10 Americans affected by diabetes, this month serves as a reminder of the vital role early intervention plays in reducing the risk of severe complications such as blindness, nerve damage, and kidney disease.

Diabetes is a chronic condition where the body struggles to produce or use insulin effectively, causing elevated blood sugar levels that can damage various organs and systems. It is a leading cause of disability and death in the United States, but the good news is that with proper care, it can be managed and, in some cases, prevented.

"Diabetes can often go undiagnosed until it reaches an advanced stage, which is why regular screenings and testing are crucial," said Heidi Wess, PA-C, Diabetes Educator at Chadron Community Hospital. "By raising awareness and encouraging early action, we can significantly reduce the long-term health impacts of diabetes and save lives."

The month highlights the four main types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 Diabetes:** A lifelong condition where the body does not produce insulin.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** A more common form where the body becomes resistant to insulin or doesn't produce enough.
- **Prediabetes:** Elevated blood sugar levels that are not yet at diabetic levels but increase the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.
- **Gestational Diabetes:** A form of diabetes that develops during pregnancy but typically resolves after childbirth.

Prevention and Early Detection

In particular, individuals with prediabetes and those at risk for Type 2 diabetes can take proactive steps to delay or prevent the onset of the disease through lifestyle changes such as diet, exercise, and weight management.



Healthcare providers stress the importance of knowing your numbers. Regular testing for blood sugar levels can help detect changes early and allow for timely intervention to manage or reverse the progression of the disease.

How You Can Get Involved

- **Get Tested:** Schedule a glucose test with your healthcare provider.
- **Stay Active:** Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days.
- **Eat Healthy:** A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help manage blood sugar levels.
- **Spread the Word:** Share diabetes awareness information through social media, workplaces, and local communities.
- **Join a Diabetes Prevention Workshop:** Workshops begin in January. You'll learn ways to take charge of your health, how to get active, eat healthily, manage stress, and prevent diabetes. Plus, you'll get weekly support for the first 6 months followed by monthly support for the first year. For more information, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/mvz24w22>
- **Join a Living Well with Diabetes workshop:** If you already have diabetes, this six-week workshop is for you! You'll learn strategies to more effectively manage your health and blood sugar levels. Plus, you'll learn strategies to help you take charge of your life and your health. For more information, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/mvz24w22>

For more information about programs to prevent or manage diabetes, reach out to Cheri Farris at cfarris@pphd.ne.gov or 308-220-8020.

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit www.pphd.ne.gov/pwwc.html or call Berossek 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.

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.