

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Preventing Heat-related Illnesses

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to encourage residents to take precautions to stay healthy and avoid injuries during the heat of the summer. Each year more than 700 people die from extreme heat and high temperatures in the United States. Those at highest risk include people ages 65 and older, young children, people with weakened immune systems, and those with chronic diseases.

Extreme heat means temperatures are much hotter and/or more humid than average for the time of the year. Heat-related illness happens when the body is not able to properly cool itself, or the body temperature rises faster than it can cool itself down. “If your body temperature gets too high it can cause damage to your organs and make you seriously ill,” explains Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator for SWNPHD. “Heat-related deaths and illnesses can be prevented if you know what to look for and act quickly.”

Warning Signs of Heat-related Illness

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Fast pulse/heartbeat
- Fainting (passing out)

If any of these symptoms are present, move to a cooler place right away. Stop physical activity and put cool wet cloths on your body. Get medical attention if symptoms are severe or last more than an hour.

You can prevent heat related illnesses if you take the following recommendations:

- Stay in an air-conditioned indoor location as much as you can.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.
- Pace yourself.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.

- Never leave children or pets in cars.
- Check the local news or weather apps for heat warnings and updates.

For more information on heat-related illnesses visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website [swhealth.ne.gov](https://www.swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. For questions, call 308-345-4223, one number three locations (McCook, Imperial & Ogallala), Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

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