

For Immediate Release

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Preventing Heat-related Illnesses

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to encourage everyone to take precautions to avoid injuries or illness due to the heat of the summer. Those at highest risk of injury due to extreme heat include people ages 65 and older, young children, people with weakened immune systems, and those with chronic diseases.

The weather has been cooler than normal in southwest Nebraska this summer; however, temperatures are heating up and extreme heat is possible. Extreme heat means temperatures are much hotter and/or more humid than average. Heat-related illness happens when the body temperature rises faster than it can cool itself down. If the body temperature gets too high it can cause damage to organs like the heart, brain, and kidneys, and can make you seriously ill. 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 you notice any of these symptoms, 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.

How to Prevent Heat-related Illness

- Stay in air-conditioned indoor locations 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 if you choose to work outside and take breaks often.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on friends and neighbors 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 contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. For questions, call 308-345-4223, one number three locations (McCook, Imperial & Ogallala), Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

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