

July 18, 2016

**For immediate release**

Contact: *Melissa Propp, RN 308-345-4223*

## **Protect Yourself and Your Family in Extreme Heat**

**McCook** – “Be aware of extreme heat and take measures to prevent heat stress,” recommends Melissa Propp, RN Public Health Nurse at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). “Anyone can suffer from hot weather when the heat index is high.”

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following to prevent heat exhaustion or heat stroke:

### **Stay cool**

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings.
- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device
- Limit outdoor activity, especially midday when it is the hottest part of the day, and avoid direct sunlight.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths to lower your body temperature.
- Check on at-risk friends, family and neighbors at least twice a day.

### **Stay hydrated**

- Drink more than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink
- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
- Make sure your family, friends and neighbors are drinking enough water.

### **Stay informed**

- Check your local news for extreme heat warnings and safety tips.
- Keep your friends, family and neighbors aware of weather and heat safety information.

Additionally, SWNPHD encourages all residents to learn the signs and first aid response for heat-related illness. Warning signs and symptoms vary but may include:

## **Heat Exhaustion**

### **Symptoms**

Heavy sweating  
Weakness  
Skin cold, pale, & clammy  
Weak pulse  
Fainting and vomiting

### **What You Should Do**

Move to a cooler location.  
Lie down and loosen your clothing  
Apply cool, wet cloths to as much of your body as possible.  
Sip water.  
If you have vomited and it continues, seek medical attention.

## Heat Stroke

### Symptoms

High body temperature (103+)  
Hot, red, dry or moist skin  
Rapid and strong pulse  
Possible unconsciousness

### What You Should Do

Call 911 immediately – this is a medical emergency.  
Move the person to a cooler environment.  
Reduce the person's body temperature with cool cloths/bath  
**Do NOT give fluids.**

Those typically at the greatest risk include: those over age 65, infants, young children, overweight individuals, those performing manual labor or exercising outdoors, people who are physically ill, especially those with heart disease or high blood pressure and those taking certain medications for depression, insomnia, or poor circulation.

On average, 675 deaths from extreme heat events occur each year in the United States.

For additional information on heat stress visit [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress), call 308-345-4223 or visit us at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street – one block north of Arby's in McCook. You can also follow us on Facebook.com/swnphd and Twitter@swpublichealth. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Furnas, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

###