

## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Don't Let the Heat Make You Sick**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to encourage everyone to take precautions to not get sick due to the heat this summer. Some simple precautions include drinking enough water, never leaving children or pets in cars, and signing up for heat alerts.

“Hundreds of people suffer from heat related illnesses and emergencies each year,” explains Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator at SWNPHD. “You can avoid problems by knowing when there are going to be extra hot days.” The National Weather Service (NWS) uses several methods for calculating possible extreme temperatures and issues their official heat watches, warnings, and advisories. Sign up for alerts through the FEMA app or see the NWS website at [weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov).

A young child's body does not adapt to rising temperatures as effectively as an adult. A child's temperature may rise 3 to 5 times faster than an adult, which makes any exposure to extreme heat more dangerous for them. Some other groups that are more vulnerable to heat-related emergencies are individuals with chronic illness, older adults, and pregnant women. Older adults or people with chronic diseases often take medications that cause problems if there is increased body temperature or extreme heat exposure.

Pets are also very vulnerable to hyperthermia (overheating) as they can only regulate heat through panting and small sweat glands on the pads of the paws. A temperature of 104 degrees puts your pets at risk of possible organ damage or death.

Heat-related emergencies can be prevented. Children, people with disabilities, and pets should never be left in a car. Temperatures can quickly rise as high as 50 degrees warmer than the outside air temperature. Within 10 minutes the inside temperature of a vehicle could reach a potentially fatal 109 degrees on a 90-degree day.

This summer as the weather becomes warmer you can use the following recommendations to help keep you, your family, and your pets safe:

- 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 if you choose to be active outside and take breaks often.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on friends or neighbors and have someone do the same for you.

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

For more information on heat safety contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. The website [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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