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For Immediate Release:

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Health Director: Take Precautions For Heat

“When we have extreme heat conditions, meaning summertime temperatures are hotter and/or more humid than the average for South Central Nebraska this time of year, then we need to take precautions against heat-related illnesses,” advises Michele Bever, executive director for the South Heartland District Health Department.

With temperatures predicted to be in the 90-100 degrees range this week, it is important to “Identify your ‘cool place’, follow prevention tips, and help those most at risk,” she said.

“During extreme heat we recommend you find a ‘cool place’ for relief from the heat,” advises Michele Bever, executive director for the South Heartland District Health Department.

Excessive heat exposure can cause illness and even death, but heat-related illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke, are preventable if people take precautions and properly cool themselves.

Take these steps to prevent heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty water to keep your body hydrated. Stay away from alcoholic and high sugar drinks, which can actually increase your body’s fluid loss.
- Wear appropriate clothing including loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Apply sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher (sunburn interferes with your body’s ability to cool itself).
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully to limit activity during the hottest part of the day.
- Pace yourself, especially if you are not used to working or exercising outside. If exertion in the heat makes your heart pound and leaves you gasping for breath. STOP all activity, get into a cool place (at least into the shade) and rest. Watch for symptoms of light-headedness, confusion, or feeling weak or faint.
- Use a Buddy System when working or playing in the heat to monitor your co-worker’s or teammate’s condition and for them to do the same for you. Heat related illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness.
- Monitor those at high risk. If you know someone who is 65 years of age or older, check on them at least twice a day watching for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Others at risk of heat-related illness include infants and young children, people who are

overweight, people who over-exert during work or exercise, people with chronic conditions (such as those with heart disease, high blood pressure, asthma or mental illness), or who take certain medications such as antidepressants or tranquilizers.

- Don't leave children or pets in parked cars. Even with the windows cracked open, the temperature inside a car can rise almost 20 degrees in the first 10 minutes putting anyone inside at risk for serious heat-related illness or even death.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. "If a person's body temperature exceeds 102 degrees F, assist them to cool in the shade or in an air conditioned building and seek emergency medical assistance," Bever said.

For more information visit the CDC's website

http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp or contact South Heartland District Health Department at 1-877-238-7595 or visit www.southheartlandhealth.org.

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