

*Be vigilant about preventing heat-related illness.*

A heat advisory means a period of hot temperatures is expected. When hot temperatures are combined with high humidity, there's potential for heat-related illnesses.

During a prolonged heat spell, people's heat tolerance can go down and heat-related illnesses usually go up according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is due to the buildup of heat in living and work areas, the body experiencing continued fluid shortage and air-conditioning equipment breaking down.

"It's important to continue to be vigilant about staying cool and taking other precautions to prevent heat-related illness," said Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

- Drink plenty of water and don't wait until thirsty to drink.
- Avoid alcohol and limit drinks with caffeine.
- Wear loose, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.
- Never leave children or pets in a parked car.
- Pets can suffer from heat-related illness too. If a pet spends its days outside, make sure it has plenty of fresh water and shade.
- If outdoors, move at a slower pace and take frequent rest breaks.
- Don't get too much sun. Sunburn reduces the body's ability to dissipate heat.
- Try to limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- If there is no air conditioning in the home, go to a public building to cool off.
- Electric fans may provide comfort, but when temperatures reach the high 90s, fans won't prevent heat-related illness. Take a cool shower or bath or move to an air-conditioned place.
- Check on elderly friends and neighbors. Make sure they're staying cool and hydrated.

The risk for heat-related illness and death is higher for infants and the elderly, whose internal thermostats do not regulate body temperature well. People with chronic medical conditions, outdoor workers and people who exercise outside are also at increased risk.

Heat exhaustion can develop following exposure for several days to high temperatures.

Symptoms include rapid heartbeat, cold, pale clammy skin, nausea, dizziness, weakness, and fatigue.

Heatstroke, the most serious heat-related illness, is a medical emergency characterized by a body temperature of 103 degrees F or greater. Symptoms include hot, red skin, rapid heartbeat, shallow breathing, disorientation, delirium, and coma.

Anyone suffering from these conditions should be moved into the shade or air conditioning. If heatstroke or serious heat exhaustion is suspected, get emergency medical assistance.