

For Immediate Release

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North Central District Health Department

Contact: Ann Fritz

Ways to Beat the Heat

As heat index continues to rise to temperatures over 100 degrees it is important to remember that you can become ill or even die if your body isn't able to compensate and properly cool you off. Between 1979 and 2003, there were 8,015 heat related deaths in the United States. Your body's ability to cool itself off during extremely hot weather is affected by high humidity. Sweat doesn't evaporate as quickly when the humidity is high so the body isn't releasing heat and quickly as it needs to. Personal factors that also affect your body's ability to cool itself include age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sun burn, prescription drugs, and alcohol.

People at greatest risk for heat-related illnesses include the elderly, the very young, people with mental illnesses and chronic illnesses, but young and healthy people can also become ill if they participate in outside activities and don't take precautions to protect themselves from the heat. Spending time in air-conditioned homes or public facilities is the best way to protect yourself from heat-related illnesses. Other steps that can be taken to prevent illnesses or even death caused by the heat include:

- Drinking plenty of fluids. Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you are thirsty to drink
- Drink 2 to 4 cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside
- Wearing lightweight light colored clothes and sunscreen
- Avoid direct sunlight
- Pace yourself
- Do not leave children in cars
- Check on neighbors, use the buddy system
- Use common sense
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar
- Remind others to drink more water
- Stay informed by checking local radio and television stations for extreme heat alerts and safety tips.

For more information call Peggy Hart at North Central District Health Department at 1-877-336-2406 or visit the CDC Web site at

www.cdc.gov/Features/ExtremeHeat/ . *North Central District Health Department*

serves Antelope, Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Pierce, and Rock Counties.