August 09, 2010

News Release

For Immediate Release

Take Precautions to Avoid Heat-related Illness

The National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory to begin today, August 9, 2010 projected to last through Wednesday, August 11, 2010. The Springfield-Greene County Health Department reports 125 heat related illnesses have been reported in Greene County from June 3, 2010 – August 8, 2010. Of those reported illnesses, 15 have been hospitalized. The Health Department reminds the community to take steps to protect against heat-related illnesses.

Precautions to protect against heat-related illness include:

- Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty; avoid drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine
- Avoid strenuous work or exercise outside during the hottest part of the day (If that is not practical, take frequent breaks and remember to drink plenty of water.)
- Wear light-weight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen
- Check on senior adults, young children and pets
- Stay in an air-conditioned facility; If your home is not air conditioned, visit a shopping center, public library, community center, cooling center or other air-conditioned facility
- Find out if your medications increase your susceptibility to heat-related illnesses

Exposure to hot and humid conditions can cause heat-related illnesses such as heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and death. When heat and humidity are high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions can increase risk of heat illness including age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use. Common signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses are:

- Heavy sweating
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Muscle cramps
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Growing pale
- Fatigue
- Exhaustion or weakness

If you or someone you know experiences any of these symptoms, seek relief from heat. If symptoms persist, seek medical attention.

The following cooling centers will be open as needed in Springfield to provide air-conditioned facilities and relief from the heat:

- American Red Cross, 1545 N West Bypass
- Salvation Army, 1707 W Chestnut Expressway
- YMCA, 1901 E Republic Street
- YMCA, 417 S Jefferson
- Ozarks Technical Community College Common Areas
In addition to taking steps to protect yourself and your family, protect your pets from heat-related illness by providing a shaded area if your pet lives outdoors, provide fresh water and leave pets at home in cooler areas rather than taking them along in your car. It is not safe to leave pets unattended in vehicles during high temperatures.

For more information, contact: Katie Towns-Jeter MPH, Public Information Administrator, 417-874-1205