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News Release

For Immediate Release

Steps to Protect Against Heat-Related Illnesses

High temperatures have begun and the Springfield-Greene County Health Department urges residents to take steps to protect against heat-related illnesses.

Heat-related illnesses like heat exhaustion and heat stroke occur when the body's temperature control system is overloaded. Children, senior adults and people with chronic illness are at highest risk.

**Heat exhaustion** is the most common heat-related illness and can lead to dehydration. Symptoms include heavy sweating, paleness, tiredness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness or fainting, headache, nausea or vomiting. A person with these symptoms should move to a cool spot, rest and drink cool water. If symptoms worsen or last longer than an hour, they should seek medical attention.

**Heat stroke** occurs when the body's temperature climbs to 104°F. It can be deadly. Call 9-1-1 immediately if a person has symptoms including a high body temperature, red, hot or dry skin, rapid pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion or unconsciousness.

To protect against heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty; avoid drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine
- Wear light-weight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, hats and sunglasses and use sunscreen
- 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.)
- Use a buddy system between co-workers in high heat-stress jobs to watch for signs of heat stress
- Check on senior adults, young children and pets
- Never leave infants, children, senior adults or pets in a parked vehicle
- Eat small, frequent meals and avoid high protein foods, hot foods and heavy meals
- 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
- Do not rely on fans as your primary cooling device; fans re-circulate room air and may actually increase your body temperature and your risk of heat-related illness
- Ask your pharmacist or health care provider if medication you are taking puts you at increased risk for heat-related illness
- Provide pets with extra water and access to a shady environment
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