

Health Department Offers tips to Stay Safe in the Heat

(KTNC) - Hot and humid conditions are forecast to continue through at least the rest of the week through the upcoming Labor Day weekend, with high temperatures in the mid-to-upper 90s.

The Southeast Nebraska Health Department has advice for those who will be outdoors during the heat wave. Health Department Director Kay Oestmann says they have a real concern this time of year as the high school sports season gets underway. She says it's important for both participants and spectators to stay hydrated. (play audio :24 "while you're competing.")

The best thing to drink is water. A general rule of thumb Oestmann suggests is at least one pint of water per hour, and don't wait until you're thirsty before drinking. (play audio :47 "fluids.")

There are signs to watch for that might indicate someone is becoming overheated. The first Oestmann says is if they stop sweating. (play audio :31 "to a doc.")

If you do have outdoor tasks to complete, Oestmann suggests completing those chores early in the morning or later in the evening. If you do go out in the evening, in addition to the heat, Oestmann says to use insect repellent as well as sunscreen, as the mosquitoes are still out there, perhaps carrying West Nile virus.

The Southeast Nebraska Health Department has started an initiative in conjunction with area schools. (play audio :23 "with them.")

In addition, Oestmann says to watch out for others – especially those who are very old or very young.

Those on limited incomes should contact their utility company, the Department of Health and Human Services, or local community action agencies for information on any programs that may help with utility costs. Some agencies may have fans available to help people stay cool.