What a rainy summer we’ve had so far! Lately we’ve been getting more rain than we see in a normal July, but on those hot days we do need to take precaution to prevent heat-related illnesses.

An average of 658 people in the US each year succumb to extreme heat. Many times heat-related illnesses are preventable if you prepare and take preventative steps to avoid getting over-heated.

H2O is the way to go! Avoid energy drinks, caffeine, sugary drinks and alcohol. On a hot day, an adult should drink 8 oz of water at least every 20 minutes, or between 24-32 oz every hour. Drinking water at shorter intervals will help keep you hydrated. You should drink water before and after being in the heat, so you’re not playing catch up. Take caution to not drink more than 48 oz in an hour because this can cause a medical emergency due to decrease in salt concentration in your blood.

Other measures of prevention are as follows:

\*Wear loose-fitting, light-weight, light-colored clothing.

\*Wear wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses and broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours or more often if sweating/swimming. UV rays are the strongest between 10am-4pm, so keep this in mind while outdoors.

\*Reduce or eliminate strenuous activities or do them in cooler parts of the day.

\*Take extra precautions with certain medications that can affect your body’s ability to stay hydrated/dissipate heat.

\*Never leave anyone (humans or pets) in a parked car. Keep doors locked to prevent children entering.

\*Provide plenty of fresh water for pets and leave water in a shady area.

\*Be cautious if you’re at a higher risk.

\*Take time to adjust yourself by not spending excessive amounts of time in the heat until you acclimated to it.

\*Check on elderly, disabled, or homebound family, friends and neighbors on hot days to assist if needed.

Risk Factors for Heat-Related Illness:

\*Age

\*Exertion

\*Obesity

\*Sudden exposure to hot weather

\*Lack of air conditioning

\*Certain medications and health conditions

Sun exposure is not all bad and is good for the body, in moderation, because it enhances mood, helps with seasonal depression, relieves stress, improves sleep and is a source of vitamin D.

Enjoy time outside this summer, but remember, whether working or playing outdoors in the heat (between rains), to take precautions to prevent heat-related illness for you, your family, friends, neighbors, and of course pets.