

Keeping Your Children Healthy and Safe in the Summer

As we begin another period of very warm weather, we want to be able to give you some information which can help you prevent accidents and injuries in the home.

Sun Safety

The NHS has issued the following advice: Exposing your child to too much sun may increase their risk of skin cancer later in life.

[Sunburn](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sunburn/pages/introduction.aspx) (<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sunburn/pages/introduction.aspx>) can also cause considerable pain and discomfort in the short term. That's why babies and children need to have their skin protected between March and October in the UK.

Tips to keep you child safe in the sun

- Encourage your child to play in the shade – for example, under trees – especially between 11am and 3pm, when the sun is at its strongest.
- Keep babies under the age of six months out of direct sunlight, especially around midday.
- Cover exposed parts of your child's skin with sunscreen, even on cloudy or overcast days. Use one that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above and is effective against UVA and UVB. Don't forget to apply it to their shoulders, nose, ears, cheeks, and the tops of their feet. Reapply often throughout the day.
- Be especially careful to protect your child's shoulders and the back of their neck when they're playing, as these are the most common areas for sunburn.
- Cover your child up in loose cotton clothes, such as an oversized T-shirt with sleeves.
- Get your child to wear a floppy hat with a wide brim that shades their face and neck.
- Protect your child's eyes with sunglasses that meet the British Standard (BSEN 1836:2005) and carry the "CE" mark – check the label.
- If your child is swimming, use a waterproof sunblock of factor 15 or above. Reapply after toweling.

Read more about [summer safety for younger children](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/baby-safety-tips.aspx) (<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/baby-safety-tips.aspx>).

Sunlight and vitamin D

The best source of vitamin D is summer sunlight on our skin. Because it's important to keep your child's skin safe in the sun, it's recommended all babies and young children aged six months to five years should take a daily supplement containing vitamin D, in the form of vitamin drops. See more about [vitamin D for babies and young children](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/Pages/vitamins-for-children.aspx) (<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/Pages/vitamins-for-children.aspx>).

Window Safety

Advice from Public Health England during Heatwaves recommends keeping windows shut during the

Keeping Your Children Healthy and Safe in the Summer

hottest part of the day to prevent rooms over-heating. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) also recommend:

- Fitting child resistant window restrictors but make sure you can get out easily in an emergency
- Do not put anything under the window (chairs, boxes, toys etc.) that can be climbed on

Paddling Pools; Swimming Pools and Ponds

The Institute for Health Visiting suggest that if you have a garden pond, fill it in or securely fence it off while your child is small. Be aware of ponds at other people's homes, too. While paddling pools are fun to use in the summer you should always supervise young children when they're playing in their pool. Always empty the water immediately after use.

Safekids.co.uk say that if you have a swimming pool in your garden, you can take valuable steps to ensure safety measures are in place. For example:

- Erect a fence around the swimming pool with a gate that can be securely locked when not in use.
- Although inflatables, such as small dinghies or animal-shaped items, are fun when used safely, they can be dangerous where young children are involved (for example, drifting out into the deep area). So aim to keep their use at a minimum or only when responsible adults are around to supervise.
- Install a lifejacket or lifesaving ring by the side of the pool, so it can be used if an emergency situation occurs.
- Ensure you have details of any emergency telephone numbers and a telephone near the poolside, so they can be utilised in an emergency.
- Always make sure that children are supervised at all times when using the pool.
- Ensure the swimming pool is kept in tip-top condition, without cracked tiles (which may trip people up or cause accidental cuts) and with clean water.
- Ensure children know how to behave properly and safely when using the pool

Keep Hydrated

The NHS recommend: Continue to breastfeed infants at risk of dehydration, or give them other milk feeds. Older children at risk of dehydration can be given diluted squash. Avoid giving fruit juices and carbonated drinks.

If an infant or child is already dehydrated, they should be given rehydration fluids (available from pharmacies). You might find a teaspoon or syringe can be helpful for getting fluid into a young child.

If left untreated, severe dehydration can be serious and cause [fits \(seizures\)](#) (<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Febrile-convulsions/Pages/Introduction.aspx>), brain damage and death.

Read more about [treating dehydration](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/) (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/>).