



Staying safe in the sun

Sun safety is vitally important, particularly for babies and children who have delicate skin that burns easily.

Protecting children from the harmful effects of the sun limits the risk of them developing skin cancer in later life. Sunburn can also cause considerable pain and discomfort in the short term. The following **SMART** points are worth remembering:

Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm, e.g. under trees.

Make sure you never burn.

Aim to cover up with a t-shirt, hat and sunglasses.

Remember to take extra care with children.

Then use a sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher and protects against UVA and UVB.

[More information on Page 2](#)

For additional Parent Tips see www.ihv.org.uk

The information in this resource was updated on 30/05/2019 and will be reviewed again in 05/2021 and when new evidence becomes available.

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- Take particular care with very young children. If you have a baby under 6-months old keep them out of direct sunlight, especially in the middle of the day when the sun is at its strongest.
- The Lullaby Trust produce guidance on keeping babies cool when out and about in hot weather as part of their Safer Sleep advice (<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/baby-summer-safety/>). Babies' prams and buggies should not be covered with blankets, cloths or any cover that prevents the air circulating and could lead to overheating. Attaching a clip-on sunshade or parasol to a pram or buggy is recommended, as well as checking if your baby is getting too hot by feeling their tummy or the back of their neck.
- Always protect your child's skin using sun cream and make sure they wear a hat with a wide brim on hot days as this protects face, neck and ears. If it's warm but overcast, you still need to use sunscreen.
- Make sure you use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 (and higher if you are travelling abroad - a very high factor sun block developed for babies and children offers the best protection in warmer climates). Sunscreen has a use by date, so if your bottle is older than 6 months it won't fully protect your child. Always buy a new bottle if in doubt.
- Buy a sunscreen with both protection against UVA and UVB rays and apply cream liberally. Make sure any area of exposed skin is covered and don't forget to apply to ears, feet, hands, the back of the neck and shoulders. The back of the neck and shoulders are the most common areas of sunburn. Make sure you reapply cream to your child's skin throughout the day.
- If you're on the beach or your child is playing outside with their top off, make sure they cover up during the hottest part of the day. Use a loose-fitting t-shirt or specially designed sun-top.
- Encourage children to play in the shade between the hours of 11am and 3pm when the sun is at its strongest. If you're on holiday, use this time to have lunch in the shade, or put your baby or toddler down for a nap. Older children can still have fun as long as they stay out of the sun - playing in the full glare of the sun or in the swimming pool or sea during these hours puts them at risk of burning, even if they are using sun protection.
- Use a waterproof sunblock factor SPF 15 or above if your child is swimming, and reapply cream when they come out of the water.
- Eyes can also get damaged by the sun so it's important to protect your child's eyes with sunglasses. When buying sunglasses make sure they meet the British Standard (BS EN ISO 12312-1:2013) and carry the CE mark.
- Some sun creams can aggravate eczema so, if your child has the skin condition, make sure you check sun cream for ingredients you know your child is allergic to. Test the cream on a small area of skin first. If it doesn't cause any irritation, apply your child's normal emollient or steroid cream first, wait for 30 minutes and then fully apply the sunscreen. We have more information on our separate fact sheet on eczema which you may like to take a look at.

More information:

For further tips on staying safe in the sun, including helpful videos on how to apply sunscreen, please visit:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/safety-in-the-sun

For additional Parent Tips see www.ihv.org.uk

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