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Look after yourself and others during hot weather

Summer is a great time and as the days get sunnier and warmer, it's the perfect time to be outside. But too much sun can give you wrinkles, sunburn and put you at risk of skin cancer.

Sun protection is something you need to be aware of every day in the summer. Whether on holiday or at home, you can protect yourself by making relatively small changes to the way you behave in the sun.

Practice safe sun! Follow our tips on sun protection:

- **Avoid excess sun exposure**, especially when the sun is at its strongest (between 11am to 3pm). Move indoors or into the shade. Take frequent breaks in a cool or well ventilated area. If you do go out on a hot day, attach a parasol or sunshade to your baby's pushchair to keep them out of direct sunlight
- **Wear appropriate clothing**. Cover up as much as possible with loose fitting lightweight and light coloured clothes, hat and sunglasses. Cover up even if it's cloudy – 30 to 50 percent of the ultraviolet rays can still reach you, even if it's overcast.
- **Make sure you rub on generous amount of sunscreen that has high SPF**. Keep reapplying sunscreen and invest in a waterproof variety.
- **Babies and children need extra protection** from the sun because their skin is delicate and easily damaged. **Children are also more likely to get burnt in the water** so take extra precaution when swimming.
- **Stay hydrated**. Make sure you have plenty of cool drinking water available and drink small quantities regularly. Avoid alcohol and caffeine which can dehydrate you.

If you get sunburn, sponge sore skin with cool water, and then apply soothing after sun lotion.

For more information and advice, visit <http://www.sunsmart.org.uk/index.htm>

Keeping cool while exercising in the sun

If you are exercising or playing sports, be careful not to exert yourself. Exercising in hot environment presents more of a challenge to the body's temperature regulating system than any other situation. Some examples of potentially serious heat injuries include heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

To avoid them, it is important you recognise the symptoms when they start, and to take the proper precautions to stay cool this summer. Some symptoms include weakness, nausea, high body temperature, cramps, dizziness, throbbing headache, and unconsciousness.

People of all ages can be susceptible, so make sure you follow these simple steps:

- **Take gradual steps in increasing the intensity of your activity.** This allows your body to better prepare for warmer conditions and reduces the chances of injuries.
- **Make sure you always stay properly hydrated,** take plenty of rest breaks, and wear lightweight clothing.
- **Plan to exercise the early morning or late evening** if possible, when the temperatures are cooler.
- **Eat plenty of carbohydrates** – exercising in the heat uses them faster.
- **Get some sleep** – lack of sleep increases your susceptibility to heat illness.

If someone feels unwell, get them somewhere cool to rest. Give them plenty of cold water (not iced) to replace lost fluids and cover them with a damp towel or sheet.