



Summer safety tips from Public Health

Keeping families safe over the summer holidays

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Sun safety

UV rays are strongest when the sun is highest in the sky, which in the UK summer is between 11:00 and 15:00. The strength of UV rays will vary depending on the country, so be aware of this if you are going abroad this summer. Find out more about what to do in a heat wave on the [NHS website](#).

Anyone can get sunburnt, including people with darker skin. Generally, people with lighter skin tones are at higher risk of sunburn, but just because people with darker skin tones might have a lower risk, this doesn't mean there is no risk at all. Therefore, everyone needs to follow sun safety messages. Find out more about sun safety on the [NHS website](#). You can still get sunburnt on cloudy days. Skin-damaging UV rays can pass through clouds so check the UV index even if it's cloudy outside.

Whilst most of us welcome warmer weather, the sun and heat can pose a significant health risk, especially to vulnerable people including children. To help you and your family stay safe this summer please follow our top tips:

- **Spend time in the shade**, especially between 11:00 and 15:00 in the UK
- **Cover up** with clothes, a wide brimmed hat and UV protection sunglasses
- **Apply sunscreen** with at least SPF 30 to protect against UVB and at least four or five stars UVA protection - use it generously, reapply regularly and use together with shade and clothing
- **Keep hydrated** by drinking plenty of water, especially when playing outside
- **Keep your home cool** by closing blinds and curtains on windows exposed to direct sunlight; move to the coolest part of your home; open windows (if safe to do so) when the air feels cooler outside than in
- If you or a family member does become sunburnt, please follow the [NHS guidance](#)

How to enjoy the sun safely



Seek shade

Take a break under trees or umbrellas, especially in the middle of the day when the sun is strongest.



Cover up

Wear a top that covers your shoulders, a wide-brimmed hat and UV-protection sunglasses.



Apply sunscreen

Pick one with at least SPF 30 and 4 or 5 stars. Use it generously and regularly.



Useful links

- [Keeping your baby safe in the sun](#)
- [NHS advice on heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#)
- [Beat the heat: hot weather advice from the UK Government](#)

Water safety

On average, 312 people a year accidentally drown in the UK and Ireland, so it is important to be able to enjoy water safely. **Always supervise children in and around water.**

Whether at home or out and about, follow these top tips from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS):

At home

These tips may be particularly useful for families with young children. Create a safe home environment:

- Vigilance, supervision, and knowledge of how to help are critical, so start by identifying locations and situations that will cause harm
- Empty paddling pools as soon as they have been used and always turn paddling pools upside down once empty
- Always supervise your children around water, including bath time (never leave children unattended)
- Always use gates, fences, and locks to prevent children from gaining access to pools of water (swimming pools, ponds, any bodies of water at home)
- Securely cover all water storage tanks and drains
- Make sure products you've purchased are fit for purpose and explain any risks

Out and About

- Check water sites for hazards, check the safest places to swim and always read the signs
- Understand a child's swimming abilities and confidence in water and always supervise young or less able children in and around water
- Create a safety plan with teenagers who may be out unsupervised around water
- Never swim in the sea when the red flag is flying
- Inflatable dinghies or lilos are a well-known hazard – do not use them in open water

Always follow the Water Safety Code:

Water Safety Code





Free water safety resources

- [Ensure that your home is a safe, secure place to enjoy water safely \(RLSS\)](#)
- [Water safety for parents, children and young people \(RoSPA\)](#)
- [Garden ponds \(RoSPA\)](#)
- [Top five beach safety tips for family safety \(RNLI\)](#)
- [Float to live – what to do in an emergency \(RNLI\)](#)
- [To search, to rescue, to save, from HM Coastguard UK](#)

Tick awareness

Ticks can be active all year round but are most active between April and July. Ticks can carry infections such as Lyme Disease, so it is important to be aware of the risks and how to avoid being bitten when out and about.

For more information, take a look at the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) [tick awareness leaflet](#) and [further information](#).

Useful tips to stay away from ticks:

- Remember that you could be exposed to ticks whenever you spend time outdoors, including when in your garden or the local park
- You can reduce the chance of tick bites by walking on clearly defined paths, using insect repellent and performing regular tick checks
- Some tick bites can result in infection, so it is important to remove ticks safely and as quickly as possible
- The safest way to remove a tick is by using a pair of fine-tipped tweezers or a tick removal tool
- If you begin to feel unwell with flu-like symptoms or develop a spreading circular rash (which usually appears within 1 to 4 weeks after being bitten), contact your GP or dial NHS 111 promptly

Safe Farm visits

Avoiding infections

Visiting farms can be great fun for the whole family but contact with farm animals carries a risk of catching infections from some bugs they carry naturally.

You can reduce this risk by washing your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after contact with animals or their environment. Always wash hands before eating and drinking on farm visits. Hand gel or wipes are not a substitute for washing hands.



Types of infection

Cryptosporidiosis, Escherichia coli (E. coli) and Salmonella are some of the common bugs you can pick up when you visit a farm.

- Cryptosporidiosis mainly presents as a tummy bug with abdominal pain, diarrhea and vomiting.
- E.coli can be mild with a tummy ache or more serious with vomiting, bloody diarrhea and kidney problems in children.
- Salmonella is usually a mild condition associated with tummy aches, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, it can become more serious.

If you or anyone in your group is sick or has diarrhoea within two weeks of visiting a farm contact your GP or call NHS 111.

For more information about safe farm visits, see the [UK Health Security Agency blog](#).

More information

For further information on supporting families to stay safe and well over the summer holidays, please visit [our website](#), or contact publichealth@westsussex.gov.uk with any questions.