

Protecting children from the sun

Young skin is delicate and very easily damaged by the sun. All children, no matter whether they tan easily or not, should be protected from the sun.

Children with fair or red hair, pale eyes or freckles are most at risk. Keep babies under six months out of direct sunlight, especially around midday.

Ten tips for protecting children in the sun

- 1. Use shade**
Keep babies in complete shade: under trees, umbrellas, canopies or indoors.
- 2. Know the shadow rule**
If your shadow is longer than you are, then you are safe from the sun. When your shadow is shorter than you are tall, the sun can burn you.
- 3. Cover them up**
Dress children in cotton clothing that is baggy, close-weave and cool. Oversized T-shirts are good for covering most of their skin.
- 4. Use dry clothing**
Remember that wet clothing stretches and can lose up to half of its UV protection – put children in dry clothing after playing in water.
- 5. Protect shoulders and necks**
Don't put children in vest tops or sundresses if they are spending a lot of time outdoors – shoulders and backs of necks get easily burned.
- 6. Wear sunglasses**
Buy good quality, wraparound sunglasses for children, as soon as they can wear them. Sunglasses don't have to be expensive brands, but toy sunglasses can do more harm than good.
- 7. Wear a hat**
Encourage children to wear hats with brims, especially if they are not wearing sunglasses. The wider the brim, the more skin will be shaded from the sun.
- 8. Use sunscreen wisely**
Apply factor 15+ sunscreen before children go outdoors. Then reapply often to be sure of good coverage. Don't forget their shoulders, nose, ears, cheeks and tops of feet.
- 9. Remember sunscreen washes off**
Always use waterproof factor 15+ sunscreen when children are swimming or playing outdoors with water. Reapply after towelling.
- 10. Remember you can burn in the UK**
The Great British sun is quite capable of burning your child! Take extra care at home as well as abroad.