



Dear Parents/Carers,

We have been enjoying the most wonderful sunshine and I hope this continues, as we look forward to the school holiday.

Children generally spend more time outdoors, during the most dangerous UV hours, over lunchtime. Sun burn in childhood could double the risk of skin cancer in later life.

By using the following practical tips, you will help protect both you and your child, from being over exposed to the sun, preventing potential skin problems in the future.

Protecting children

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 at most risk. Keep babies under six months out of direct sunlight, especially around midday.

Storing up trouble for later life

Skin cancer is very rare in children. But many skin cancers take years to develop. Damage to the DNA of our skin cells when young, may develop into skin cancer several decades later. The most serious type of skin cancer - **melanoma- is the second most common cancer in 15 to 34 year olds.**

Studies have found that sunburn during childhood can increase the risk of skin cancer later on in life. This is why it is important to ensure that children stay safe in the sun.



Ten tips for protecting children in the sun

- **Set good habits for the future** Teaching children safe sun habits while they are young sets a good pattern for later life.
- **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.
- **Use shade** Keep babies in complete shade: under trees, umbrellas, canopies or indoors. Provide shade for prams and buggies, if possible.
- **Cover them up** When outdoors, protect a baby's skin with loose-fitting clothes, and a wide-brimmed hat that shades their face, neck and ears.
- **Wear sunglasses** Buy good quality, wraparound sunglasses for children, as soon as they can wear them. Sunglasses don't have to be expensive brands.
- **Find hats they like** 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.
- **Use sunscreen wisely** Use at least a factor 15 sunscreen and choose a "broad-spectrum" brand that protects against UVA rays - the more stars the better. Apply to areas that cannot be protected by clothing, such as the face, ears, feet and backs of hands. Choose sunscreens that are formulated for children and babies' skin. These products are less likely to contain alcohol or fragrances that might irritate the skin and cause allergic reactions.
- **Apply sunscreen generously and regularly.** Put some on before children go outdoors. Sunscreen can easily be washed, rubbed or sweated off – so reapply often throughout the day.
- **Don't forget school times** Remember play times and lunch breaks on summer school days too. Give children a hat to wear and, if they can't apply sunscreen at school, cover their exposed skin before they go.

What about vitamin D?

We all need some sunlight to make enough, but most of us get enough through casual exposure to the sun. Parents should not worry too much about short periods when their children might be out in the sun. But for longer times, the tips above will help to protect a child from burning in the sun.

Infants and toddlers may need more protection. Indirect sun exposure may help a baby's vitamin D levels. But if mothers have enough vitamin D while they are pregnant, then the chances are that their babies will do too. It is best to speak with your doctor if you are concerned about your baby's vitamin D levels.

If you would like more information on this or [any family health issue contact:](#)

Lynne Holden School Liaison Nurse - 01255 201646.