

wee changes can make a **big difference**

Tips for staying safer in Summer



Have fun

Summer can be a time of fun and laughter especially following a cold and wet winter. The following are general safety tips and do not replace professional advice. The aim of the tips is to offer some ideas you may find helpful to stay safe in the sun while having fun.



Be mindful of extreme heat

We may have noticed that summers are becoming increasingly warmer often with heat waves. Anyone living with a long-term condition should be especially careful in extremes of temperature and seek advice from your medical team around what would be best for you. With rising energy costs people may be reluctant to switch on an electric fan or air conditioning so maybe try and use cloths soaked in cool water or make paper fans. If you are out and about seek out building which may have air conditioning. Draw your blinds to reduce heat coming into your home and take cool showers. Try and wear clothing which is light and loose and made from natural fabrics. Avoid doing anything strenuous in extreme heat like exercising and try and schedule things you need to do for the coolest part of the day.

Being active outdoors

Whether it's working outdoors for a living, or having outdoors hobbies, it matters we are mindful during a heatwave and keep ourselves safe and protected from the sun. This also includes when we are gardening. Check out the site links which may be of interest for tips on gardening or working out door in warm weather.

Pets count too

If we have pets, we have a responsibility to also protect them from extreme heat. Never leave your pet in a car even with the window open on a sunny day. Check out the site links for looking after pets in warm weather. Make sure your pet's water bowl is topped up regularly with cool clean drinking water, if going out take water and a bowl with you and don't overdo walks and outdoor exercise. Speak to your vet about pet safe sunscreen. Be aware of how hot pavements and other surfaces can be when taking your pet for a walk. Be mindful of the age of your pet and any health conditions they may have which require extra attention. Have a cool mat they can use to cool down, even an old towel soaked in cool water can be a respite from the heat for your pet. Help your pet stay in the shade by finding shady spots to rest if you are out, this is good for you too.



Stay hydrated

It matters we stay hydrated all year round, however, in summer we need to be especially vigilant of becoming dehydrated. Checking the colour of your urine is one way to make sure you are drinking enough water. Our urine colour can be affected by medication or health conditions, so if in doubt check with your medical team. In general, pale urine the colour say of straw is what is most usual, the darker it is the more you may need to drink more water. If we become dehydrated it can make us feel dizzy, or fatigued, maybe even have muscle cramps. If we have any of those symptoms, we need to drink water, get out of the heat and if we still feel unwell visit the chemist and speak to the pharmacist. If your symptoms are very severe seek medical attention immediately.

Use sunscreen and other protection

Seek advice from your community pharmacist or other reputable source if you are unsure about the best sunscreen for you and your family. Ideally use at least factor 30. As well as sunscreen it is wise to cover up your skin and wear a sunhat and sunglasses. Be mindful that white sand and other bright surfaces reflect UV so can increase UV exposure. Protect your skin from the harmful effects of the sun. You can also spray water mist on to help cool you down. Using a clean spray bottle, fill it with cool tap water and keep it in a cool place when you go out then give yourself a wee spray when you need to refresh or feel cooler. You can also use this at night if its very warm and you are finding it hard to sleep.



Avoid certain foods and drinks

Respect the water be it seas, lochs or rivers

Even in summer the seas and lochs can be very cold. There can also be hidden hazards as what starts out as shallow water drops away to being very deep. It is important if you plan to spend time in the water that you plan ahead, know what the weather is going to be and that you let someone know where you are and when you get back safely. We recommend you read the guidance provided in the site links on water safety as well as following local guidelines and restrictions in your area.



Sugary drinks, alcohol, caffeine can be filled with chemicals which actually remove water from our tissues, so please be mindful of this and don't use drinks which can cause a thirst to quench a thirst, have some water too. We are fortunate in Scotland that for most of us the water straight from the tap is free and refreshing, why not fill a bottle before you leave home. Check out the link in the sites section to see if there are top up locations near you to top up your water bottle when you are out and about. There are many foods with a high-water count like cucumber, tomatoes, celery, watermelon, strawberries so snack on these on a hot day. If you don't like drinking water maybe add some flavour by adding cucumber, or some fresh mint, berries. Coconut water is also worth giving a go, as well as being refreshing it can help top up some of the electrolytes we lose when the weather is very warm. When it's warm avoid heavy starchy foods, enjoy salads and perhaps yoghurt and fruit which as well as being tasty can be good for our health.



Fire safety in warm weather

Please follow local regulations on fire safety. We have seen the devastation wildfires can cause so be especially careful when outdoors that you do not use anything which has a naked flame where there is a risk a wildfire could be started. In very hot weather it is easy for things to ignite so even a discarded cigarette end which is still alight could spark a wildfire. Please follow the Scottish outdoor access code for more information please check out the link in the sites links which may be of interest.



Specific conditions or health challenges

These tips do not replace professional advice, they are for general information and awareness raising. Please speak to your health care team if you have any specific health challenges which may make summer a time when you need to be extra careful e.g., if you have a heart condition. Summer at the best of times can be challenging if pregnant, even more so if there is heat wave. There are some links in the useful links section and speak to your midwifery team for advice which suits your personal circumstances.

Food safety

Food safety matters all year round, however, in warm weather it is worth being even more careful. Remember to wash hands before and after handling food. Also, clean food preparation services regularly. Be careful how you store food in the fridge keeping uncooked foods away from cooked foods and be aware of expiry dates. Follow instructions when cooking especially if you plan to barbecue. Also make sure your fridge or freezer is set to the correct temperature. Do not let picnic food sit outside in hot temperatures and use a cooler bag for perishable foods you may take on a picnic. Food can turn quickly. If it doesn't look right, smell right or taste right then it may be wise to avoid eating it.

Vulnerable adults and children

Children and vulnerable adults may need additional support to stay safe during summer as either they may not be aware of the risks, or through health challenges or other reasons be unable to manage them, themselves. This includes not leaving children or vulnerable adults in the car alone even with the window open. On very hot days the internal cabin temperature can rise significantly causing health challenges. Check out the links on the useful contacts page for tips for ensuring children and young people can have a safe summer also full of fun.



Sleeping when the weather is very warm



A challenge of a heat wave is being able to get and stay asleep. When we feel warm it can make us feel lethargic so we may be more likely to have a nap during the day. The challenge with this is we may find it harder to get to sleep at night. Finding ways to be as cool as possible in bed can help. By drinking plenty of water during the day we may be less dehydrated so find it easier to sleep. It is a balance of staying hydrated and not drinking too much before bed, then we find we need to get up for the toilet and also keeping a glass of water by the bed if we do need a drink during the night. Make the sheets and bed covering as thin as possible and consider investing in cool pillow or cool cloths. A cool cloth or wet face towel can be used to help reduce our body temperature, by placing one on the back of the neck and one on the forehead. If you have a hot water bottle, fill it with cold water and try that to help feel cooler. As ever, this does not replace professional advice and if you have specific health challenges then consult your health care team. Try and stick to the same routines you would any other day. We get into routines including routines before sleep, if we can stick to these it may help. Read the tips on what to eat and drink as this can also affect us when we are trying to sleep. There is a workbook on [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www cope-scotland.org) on sleep which may be of interest.

Gardening and wildlife

We share this planet with other people, we also share it with other creatures and plants and trees. It can be challenging for everyone and everything during a heatwave and a little kindness to us and the planet can help. Keep your bird bath topped up with fresh water for the birds to drink from as well as giving themselves a refreshing bath! Shallow dishes of water filled with pebbles can help give the bees a place to quench their thirst. Consider what plants you have in your garden which can offer shelter and food e.g., ivy. Use a climbing frame or have this contained in one area of your garden to help prevent its spread if this is going to be an issue for you.



Wee actions can help make summer safer for all of us, including the natural world

Sites links which may be of interest

- **Advice for older adults to stay safe in summer**
www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/staying-cool-in-a-heatwave/
- **Big bright blue Top up Taps are being introduced across Scotland to provide you with hydration on the go**
www.yourwateryourlife.co.uk/find-your-nearest-top-up-tap/
- **Children keeping cool in summer**
www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/getting-out-about-your-baby/summer-your-baby/keeping-kids-cool-hot-weather-eight-tips
- **Food standards**
www.test.fss.wsdev.org/consumers/food-safety/at-home/storage
- **Gardening in hot weather**
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/top-tips-for-gardening-in-hot-weather
- **Hot weather and your heart**
www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/support/practical-support/weather-and-your-heart
- **Looking after your lungs in hot weather**
www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/hot-weather
- **Outdoor working**
www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/outdoor.htm
- **Pet safety in summer**
www.rspca.org.uk
www.cats.org.uk
- **Pregnancy and hot weather**
www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/worries-and-discomforts/common-discomforts/hot-weather-and-high-body-temperature-during-pregnancy
- **Recipe ideas**
www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/
- **Scottish Outdoor access code**
www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot
- **Sleeping when the weather is very warm**
www.sleepfoundation.org/bedroom-environment/sleeping-when-its-blistering-hot
- **Further advice on managing and getting ready for hot weather**
www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/publications/hps-weekly-report/volume-53/issue-30/nhs-provide-health-advice-for-managing-heat/
www.ready.scot/respond/severe-weather/hot-weather
- **Water safety**
www.forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/health-safety-wellbeing/water-safety
- **Helping wildlife in a summer heatwave**
www.countryfile.com/wildlife/how-to-help-wildlife-during-a-summer-heatwave/

