

# Sun safety

## Simple steps to protect their skin

Keep your child cool and protect them from the sun and heat. Babies under six months should be kept out of the sun and older children should be allowed in the sun for a limited time only, and their skin should be well protected. Stay out of the sun, especially during the middle of the day. All types of skin, fair or dark, need protection.

As parents we can take simple measures to protect our children. Remember babies and toddlers are not interested in tanning and sunburn can cause damage to their skin.

Attach an effective sunshade to the pushchair to keep them out of direct sunlight. A sun hat, with a wide brim or a long flap at the back, will protect your child's head and neck from the sun. Try to use loose long sleeved clothing. Apply high factor sunscreen regularly, particularly if your child is in and out of the sea or a paddling pool.

If your baby is under 6 months, offer more fluids and if breastfeeding, breastfeed more often. If your baby is over six months old encourage them to drink water. For older toddlers and children, plenty of fruit will also help to keep their fluid levels up.

## Pharmacist says

The higher the SPF (Sun Protection Factor) the more protection. Use a complete sun block on your baby or toddler. SPFs of up to 60 are available which block out almost all of the sun's rays. Even with sunscreen, keep them in the shade whenever you can and make sure newborn babies are never in the sun. Do not forget to protect their head, skin and eyes. For older children, you can buy sunglasses from a pharmacy. Check they offer 100% UV protection.

## Vitamin D

### Is your child getting enough?

Vitamin D is important for good health, strong bones and growth. Most foods contain very little vitamin D naturally and it is mostly made in the skin by exposure to sunlight. However, you shouldn't over-expose your child to the sun, as casual sun exposure is enough.

Vitamin D helps your baby's body absorb calcium, which is needed for the healthy development of strong bones and teeth.

- 1 It is a bright day and your child is playing outside.
- 2 Are they in the shade and wearing sunscreen? Are they wearing a hat, long sleeves and trousers?
- 3 Make sure you protect your child's head, skin and eyes especially during the middle of the day.