

By practicing these tips, you can ensure that you and your children have a safe and enjoyable summer. Stay cool, stay hydrated, and make the most of the summer days ahead with peace of mind, knowing that you're keeping your little ones safe and healthy.



For more information visit  
[hpdp.gov.mt](http://hpdp.gov.mt)

or call the Health Promotion and  
Disease Prevention Directorate on  
**2326 6000**

  
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**Safe and Fun  
Summer**  
with your little ones



**Information leaflet**

## Enjoying a Safe and Fun Summer with Your Little Ones

Summer is a time of sunshine, school holidays, and a time to create lasting memories together. However, as temperatures rise, so do the risks associated with extreme heat. Heatwaves, and prolonged periods of excessively high temperatures, pose serious threats to health, especially for young children. Heat-related illnesses, including dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke, become more prevalent during these times. Therefore, it is crucial for parents to prioritise the safety and well-being of their little ones as they enjoy summer together.



## Why are children more vulnerable to the effects of hot weather?



Children are more likely to get dehydrated and feel hot during summer and heatwaves, especially babies and children up to 4 years of age because their bodies are smaller.

It is important to remember that all children can get sick from the heat.

Children cannot handle heat as well as adults, and hot weather can make some medical conditions, like asthma, worse.

Infants have more sensitive skin, making them prone to sunburns, which can exacerbate heat-related issues.

Unlike adults, infants cannot sweat effectively which impairs their ability to regulate body temperature making them more susceptible to heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke.

## Tips for taking care of children during the hot Summer months:



### Keep them well hydrated

Encourage your children to drink plenty of water throughout the day, even if they don't feel thirsty. Sugary or caffeinated beverages (such as soft drinks and energy drinks) should be avoided, and replaced instead with hydrating foods like cucumbers, salads, and watermelons. Opt for small, frequent meals that are easier to digest and keep your kids hydrated.

### Keep them cool

Dress your child in lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing to help them stay cool. Don't forget accessories like hats and sunglasses to protect against the sun's rays. Applying a high Sun Protection Factor sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors and reapplying as needed is crucial to guard against harmful UV rays.

### Never Leave Children in Parked Cars

Even for a brief errand, never leave your children alone in a parked car, as temperatures can quickly become dangerously high. Always take them with you to ensure their safety.

### Plan Outdoor Activities Wisely

Avoid outdoor activities during peak heat hours, typically between 11 AM and 4 PM. Instead, schedule outdoor adventures like walks or playground visits during the cooler early morning or late evening hours.

### Cooling Measures

When children feel hot, move them to a shaded area if outdoors but preferably move them to an airconditioned area indoors. Offer them refreshing fluids such as water or infused water, a cool bath, water mist, or swimming to cool down. Supervise them while swimming or in a cool bath to prevent accidents.

### Watch for Signs of Heat-related Illnesses

Children are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, so it is crucial to watch for signs such as increased body temperature, irritability, flushed skin, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and weakness. If any of these symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately and move the child to a cool, shaded area, preferably indoors. Apply cool towels or cold packs to help lower their body temperature. In case of doubt, call the emergency services on 112.

