**Summer Health Advice**

Don’t let your summer be ruined by sunstroke, dehydration or hay fever. Advice on avoiding the worst of their effects is all covered in our guide to summer health.

**Heatwaves and very hot weather**

There are some easy ways to stay safe when the heat arrives.

* Look out for others, especially older people, young children and babies and those with underlying health conditions.
* Close curtains on rooms that face the sun to keep indoor spaces cooler and remember it may be cooler outdoors than indoors.
* Drink plenty of water as sugary, alcoholic and caffeinated drinks can make you dehydrated.
* Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle, especially infants, young children or animals.

**Hay fever**

Hay fever can be miserable for so many people as the different blossoms and allergies run through the whole summer.

There’s currently no cure for hay fever and you unfortunately cannot prevent it. However, you can do things to ease your symptoms when the pollen count is high including:

* putting Petroleum Jelly around your nostrils to trap pollen
* wearing wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes
* showering and change your clothes after you’ve been outside to wash pollen off

For more advice on managing hay fever symptoms visit [allergyuk.org](https://www.allergyuk.org/).

**Keep hydrated**

Everyone is at risk of dehydration in hot temperatures which is why it’s always important to keep hydrated, but during hot weather it’s even more important to drink plenty of fluids like water – especially for the elderly or if you have a health condition such as diabetes.

For those reluctant to drink water, why not try homemade ice lollies made with watered-down fruit juice or squash, or adding fruits such as lemons and limes to your bottled water?

Although you may not feel particularly hungry in the heat, don’t stop eating. Perhaps try to have smaller, more frequent light meals and incorporate lots of fruits and salad which are full of water and will help hydrate you.

**Sun safety**

We all know sunscreen is important but using the right one can be a little confusing. The NHS’s general advice is a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 to protect against UVB and at least four-star UVA protection. Of course, the best protection from the sun is staying out of it at the hottest parts of the day, from 11am to 3pm.

For more sun safety tips visit [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk/).

**Bugs and bites**

Like sunburn and sand between your toes, insects and bites are a pretty unpleasant part of summer. Most insect bites and stings are not serious and will get better within a few hours or days. There’s lots of help available from [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk/)and you can also buy creams for itching and antihistamines from your pharmacy to have at home in case you need them.

**Sprains and strains**

When the weather is nice it is the perfect opportunity to put down the TV remote and head outdoors for some fun and games. Being active is good for your overall wellbeing. It builds confidence, social skills and improves concentration and learning. It also helps us maintain a healthy weight and aids sleep.

However, with being active and playing sports there is more risk of sprains and strains from tripping and falling. Most minor sprains and strains are relatively minor and can be treated at home with self-care techniques, such as paracetamol or PRICE therapy.

PRICE stands for protection, rest, ice, compression and elevation:

* **Protection** – protect the affected area from further injury – for example, by using a support.
* **Rest** – avoid exercise and reduce your daily physical activity. Using crutches or a walking stick may help if you can’t put weight on your ankle or knee. A sling may help if you’ve injured your shoulder.
* **Ice** – apply an ice pack to the affected area for 15-20 minutes every two to three hours. A bag of frozen peas, or similar, will work well. Wrap the ice pack in a towel so that it doesn’t directly touch your skin and cause an ice burn.
* **Compression** – use elastic compression bandages during the day to limit swelling.
* **Elevation** – keep the injured body part raised above the level of your heart whenever possible. This may also help reduce swelling.