

How to keep babies and children safe

when it's hot



When the weather is hot, babies and young children should be kept in a cool, shady place, given enough clean, cool water to drink, and get plenty of rest.

Babies and children have thin skins, and may easily suffer from sunburn. They should wear wide-brimmed hats that allow the air to move through them.

How to prevent heat illnesses

Heat illnesses, such as heat stroke, can be very serious and may even cause death. How to avoid heat illnesses:

1. Take hot weather warnings seriously

2. Drink lots of clean water

This is one of the best ways to prevent dehydration.

Breastfeeding moms

Breastfed babies may need extra feeds in hot weather. If your baby is older than 6 months and growing well, you can give small amounts of cool boiled water between feeds, especially if the baby is having other foods. Breastfeeding moms should also drink water.

Formula fed babies

If you are bottle feeding your baby, you can give her extra formula or small amounts of cool boiled water.

Children

Give children water to drink often throughout the day. Don't give any coffee or tea, sugary or fizzy drinks, too much sugar, fatty or salty foods.

3. Rest

Help babies and children rest as much as possible, or participate in quiet activities such as reading stories and solving puzzles. They can rest indoors or outside, so long as they are in the shade. They should not do any strenuous physical exercise, if possible, between 11.00 and 15.00 on hot days.

4. Keep cool indoors

- Try to cook when it is cooler.
- Keep windows open but close curtains or blinds during the day.
- Make sure babies and children sleep in the coolest places.

5. Stay in shade outside

Keep babies and children in deep, cool shade when they are outside.

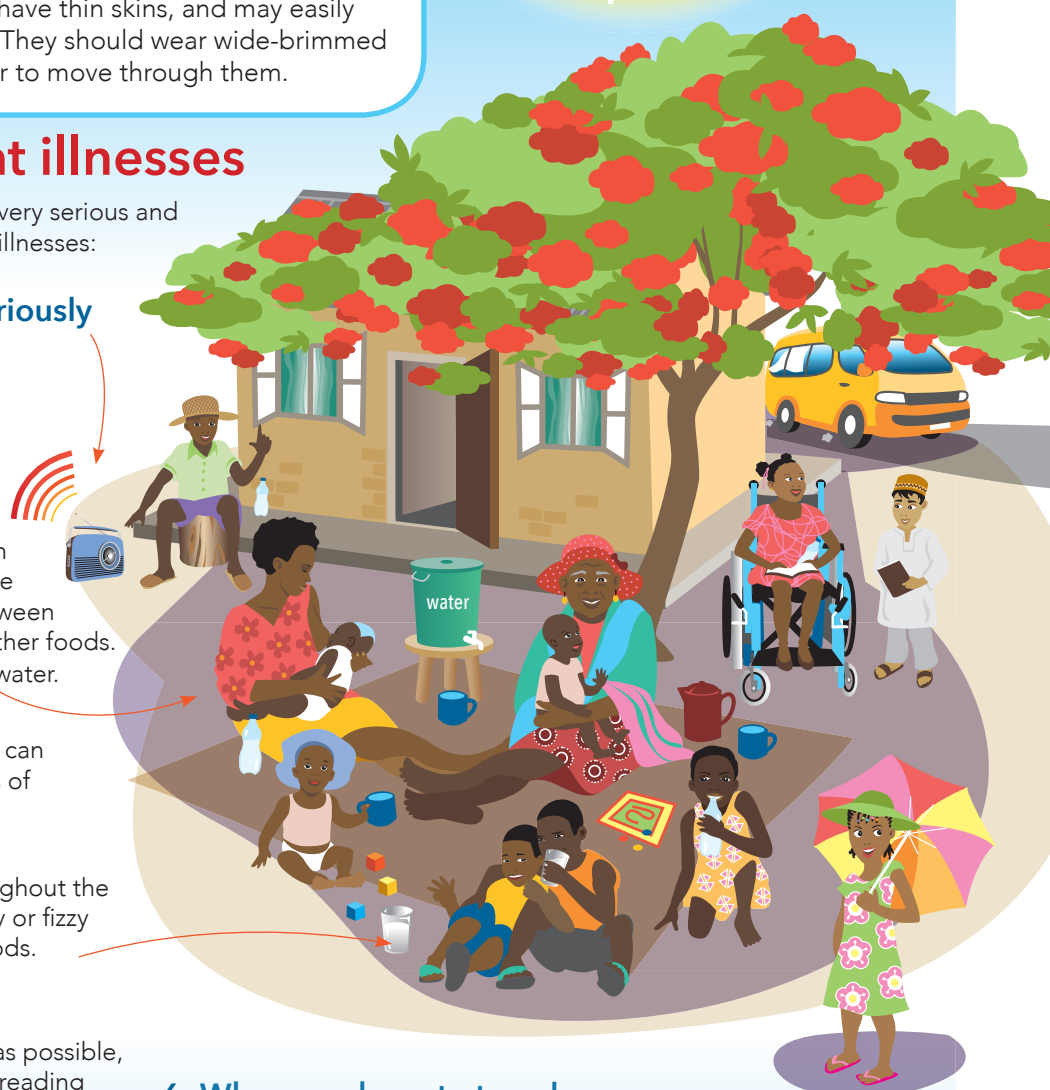
6. When you have to travel

It is best not to go on a journey when it is very hot. If you have to go, make sure your baby or child wears loose, light clothing and a wide-brimmed, breathable hat. Shading them with an umbrella may also help. Don't wrap or cover babies or young children with a blanket.

7. When in a vehicle

It gets much, much hotter inside a vehicle like a car, bus or taxi than outdoors.

- Never, ever leave a baby, small child, pets or anyone in a parked vehicle – even with the windows open.
- Put a cloth up at a window if the sun is shining onto you and your baby. Do not cover babies – it may cause them to overheat.



Signs of heat illness

Serious signs of heat illness:

- unconscious
- irritable, restless and confused
- floppy body and no energy
- can't breathe easily
- dizzy
- sore head
- the soft spot on top of a baby's head (fontanelle) may be lower (sunken) than usual
- sunken 'soft spots', eyes or cheeks
- vomiting
- dry mouth or tongue
- thirsty at first, but as baby gets weaker they may drink less
- dry eyes and baby or child doesn't have many tears when crying
- temperature going up but no sweating
- drier skin but, as heat illness gets worse, skin becomes cool and moist
- skin is cool when you touch it, but then becomes hot and red
- fewer wet nappies than usual
- dark yellow or smelly urine
- muscle cramps in legs or stomach



Keep an eye out for signs of heat illness. If you think your baby or child is suffering from heat illness, get medical help as soon as possible.

Tiny red spots, like blisters or pimples. This can be a heat rash. It is not a medical emergency.



What to do

If you see a baby (or anyone) is showing signs of a heat illness, get medical advice. The baby or child may need to be treated at a hospital or clinic. In the meantime:

- settle your child in a cool place
- wet their clothes with cool water, or wet a cloth and wipe it on their skin
- talk with your baby or child in a calm way
- if your baby or child can still respond to you, try to give them something to drink
- give the baby plenty of breast milk or formula and, if 6 months or older, a little water
- don't give your baby or child medicine – let the healthcare workers decide what is best.



Tell people in your community about the signs of heat illnesses, and how to prevent them.



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