



Be a good role model. Children learn by watching you.

For more information, ask for the
Child Health Program at

(705) 743-1000

or contact our website at

pcchu.peterborough.on.ca



... because health matters!

10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1

Produced and distributed by the
Child Health Program
June 2001

Playing Safely in the Sun



**HEALTHY
TOGETHER**
CHILDREN · FAMILIES · COMMUNITIES



...because health matters!

Always practice safe sun habits.

The hot summer sun can be very dangerous for children. They are more likely than adults to lose body fluids and become dehydrated. Sunburns, and too much time spent in the sun without sunscreen, have been linked to a greater risk of skin cancer later in life. Too many ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun can cause eye cataracts that could lead to blindness.

When the weather is very warm, and especially if there is high humidity, try to stay cool. When the humidex reading is over 40° Celsius, unnecessary activity should be discontinued. If the humidex reading is in the mid to high 30°s, outdoor activities should be limited.

When children play in hot temperatures, they can develop signs of heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion is caused by the loss of too much water. Know the signs of heat exhaustion: thirst; fatigue; confusion; vision problems; fast heart beat; headaches; dizziness; and weakness. Don't ignore them!

Find a shady, cool place to help your child rest and drink liquids. Apply cool, wet towels, and use a fan to increase air flow. If symptoms don't improve, seek medical attention immediately.



Right from birth, have your child wear sunglasses and a hat.

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke, which can be fatal.

Remember these tips to protect the health and safety of children.

Children should:

- **wear light, loose-fitting and light-coloured clothing**, such as cotton, so sweat can evaporate;
- **wear wide-brimmed hats** that allow for air flow;
- **avoid a lot of activity**, and stay indoors or in the shade during the hottest time of the day (10 a.m. - 2 p.m.);
- **avoid long exposures** to the sun;
- **drink plenty of water** before, during and after playing to replace body fluids lost due to heat; remember, when children say they are thirsty, it is already past the time when they should have been drinking;
- **take frequent rest breaks**; in hot, humid conditions, there is a greater risk of heat or sun stroke;
- **wear sunglasses** that say UVA/UVB CSA certified; get your child used to wearing sunglasses from birth; and
- **wear a sunscreen** that is SPF 15 or more anytime they are in direct sunlight; babies should not have sunscreen applied until they are over six months of age.

Never bundle a baby in blankets or heavy clothing. Infants don't tolerate heat well because their sweat glands are not well-developed. If the back of the neck feels sweaty, they are too warm.

Teach children not to touch objects left in the sun, such as metal lawn chairs, toys, or tar on a road.

Never leave children or pets inside a vehicle. The temperature inside a vehicle may reach very high levels, resulting in death in a matter of minutes.