

Media Release



Health
South Western Sydney
Local Health District

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Summer safety for your baby

Most of us find it difficult to stay cool and comfortable during a long hot summer, but it's even harder for babies, who rely on our help to control their body temperature and the environment around them.

Karitane Nurse Educator Sharlene Vlahos said when the weather heats up, many parents struggle with irritable and unsettled babies.

"Extreme heat can be quite dangerous for babies as it can lead to dehydration and heatstroke," Ms Vlahos said.

"You can check that your baby is not too hot or cold by placing your hand on their chest or tummy.

"Hydration is key for staying cool. Breastfed babies don't require water to supplement the milk, but may feed more frequently and it's vital that breastfeeding mothers stay well hydrated.

"If you have an active toddler that's running around and playing all day, stop them regularly for a drink of water," she said.

Health experts recommend staying indoors during the hottest part of the day (11am – 3pm), staying in the shade as much as possible and making sure your child is sun-safe.

"Dress them in a sun-safe hat, shirt to cover their arms, appropriate sunscreen and shoes so their little feet don't get burnt if they're running around," Ms Vlahos said.

"While children love to play in and around water, a baby or toddler can drown in less than an inch of water so always keep an eye on them.

"Parents should never leave babies in the car, even if it's just for a short time," she said.

Tips for keeping your baby cool in summer:

- cool the room but don't direct a fan or air conditioner straight onto the cot, or let the room get too cold.
- When putting your baby to sleep avoid dressing them in heavy clothing. A singlet, nappy and light muslin wrap should be sufficient.
- When bathing baby, cool them slowly in tepid, not cold water.
- Babies over six months old can be given cooled, boiled water in a cup, fruit treats from the fridge and fruit ice blocks.
- Never leave your baby alone in the car, even if it's just for a short time.

For parenting help visit www.mybabyandme.org.au or call 1300 CARING (1300 227 464).