



Safe summer – check it out

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The school bell rings for the last time in most primary schools tomorrow, and while kids everywhere will be rejoicing, adults will be in a frenzy of preparation for the long summer break.

Holidays mean parents and caregivers need to be prepared for the extra challenges of fulltime summer care to ensure a safer summer. Drawing up a list of simple precautions, and checking them off, could be the wisest investment you make all summer.

HSC spokesperson Wendy Billingsley says in the rush of holiday preparations, even if you're staying close to home, it's easy to overlook basic safety measures.

The HSC recommends dividing safety issues under topic headings to make it less likely to forget anything. From sun safety to checking the vehicle, and from water safety to careful food handling, the holidays are going to be better for everyone if a few simple preparations are in place.

For example, to be SunSmart, and avoid the pain of sunburn:

- Make sure every member of the family has a wide brimmed sun hat.
- Always have plenty of SPF 30+ sunscreen on hand – and use it liberally.
- Always have extra, loose fitting clothes to slip on.
- Check the UV Index and take appropriate action (see www.sunsmart.org.nz for advice). When it's 6 or above you need to protect yourself.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible, especially between 11am to 4pm when the levels of ultraviolet radiation are most dangerous.

And when you're travelling, remember you can still get sunburned through car windows.

Other tips for a safe and happy summer holiday include:

Travelling:

- Get the brakes and tyres checked.

- Check Warrant of Fitness.
- Check AA membership.
- Carry a first aid kit and blankets.
- Make sure windows are clean.
- Plan trips with plenty of rest stops.
- Lock the car whenever you're away from it.
- Never leave children unattended.

Food Safety

- Clean hands before handling food and after touching raw meat and poultry.
- Make sure food is cooked properly – until juices run clear and there is no pink flesh.
- Eat food as soon as possible after it has been cooked.
- Cover and refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible.

Water Safety

- Make sure children are supervised at all times.
- Don't drink and swim.
- Check for rips.
- Swim between the flags.

“Sometimes it's taking the simplest measures to keep the family safe over summer that can make all the difference,” Ms Billingsley says. “Just slipping into some shade can save lots of tears at bedtime.”

Useful websites:

www.sunsmart.org.nz

www.aa.co.nz

www.watersafety.org.nz

www.police.govt.nz/safety/
www.nzfsa.govt.nz

For further information:

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