**Stay Well This Summer Toolkit 2019**

For most people the summer is an enjoyable time - a chance to get outdoors and be active, hopefully enjoy some good weather and spend time with friends and family.

But we know that there are some risks associated with activities that are more common during the summer - and even the weather can have an impact on our health.

Stay Well This Summer is not a PHE campaign, but we have put together this toolkit to provide easy access to resources available to help stakeholders and partners prepare for and advise the public about three themes relating to summer activities and events that may have an impact on the health of the population.

These are: (and there will be crossover between the themes in some cases)

* **Sun and heat**
* **Recreation / festivals**
* **Environmental / outdoor**

There will be key messages and links to other resources for topics within these themes to help get messages to the public.

For further information, please contact the PHE South East Communications Team at southeast-pressoffice@phe.gov.uk

Contents

[Sun and Heat 3](#_Toc11316919)

[Heat health watch 3](#_Toc11316920)

[Heatwave Plan 3](#_Toc11316921)

[Heat exhaustion and heatstroke 3](#_Toc11316922)

[Dehydration 3](#_Toc11316923)

[Sun safety (including for babies) 4](#_Toc11316924)

[Cover Up, Mate (Sun protection campaign from NHS England) 4](#_Toc11316925)

[UV 4](#_Toc11316926)

[Recreation - including festivals 5](#_Toc11316927)

[Food preparation / poisoning 5](#_Toc11316928)

[Fruit and vegetable preparation 5](#_Toc11316929)

[Carbon monoxide poisoning 5](#_Toc11316930)

[Sexual health/STIs 5](#_Toc11316931)

[Drugs 5](#_Toc11316932)

[Alcohol 6](#_Toc11316933)

[Infectious diseases 6](#_Toc11316934)

[Measles/Mumps/MMR 7](#_Toc11316935)

Value of vaccines 7

[Festivals 8](#_Toc11316936)

[Environmental / outdoor 9](#_Toc11316937)

[Reservoir / lake swimming 9](#_Toc11316938)

[Physical activity challenges 10](#_Toc11316939)

[Ticks 10](#_Toc11316940)

[Giant Hogweed 10](#_Toc11316941)

Blue-Green Algae 10

[Petting farms and animals that have just given birth 11](#_Toc11316943)

[Air pollution 12](#_Toc11316944)

[Travel 12](#_Toc11316945)

# Sun and Heat

The following topics relate to the potential dangers from the sun.

Heat health watchThe Heat Health Watch Service is operated In England by the Met Office from 1 June to 15 September each year in association with Public Health England. It is designed to help healthcare professionals manage periods of extreme temperature.

The Met Office forecasts day-time and night-time maximum temperatures, which are monitored regionally. When certain heat thresholds are passed, a warning is issued and sent to relevant health professionals and people working in social care as well as displayed on the Met Office’s website. This enables health professionals to take action to minimise the impact of the heat on people's health.

The heat health watch forecast can be seen at - <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/heat-health/#?tab=heatHealth>

To accompany the heat health watch service, Public Health England has prepared its ‘*Hot weather alerts communications toolkit.’*

This toolkit contains pre-prepared key messages, social media updates and statements that can be used, according to the alert level in place at the time.

Your regional PHE communications team will be in touch if thresholds are met and will inform you of any action that may need to be taken.



Heatwave PlanThe Heatwave Plan for England is intended to protect the population from heat-related harm to health and can be found online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england>

Heat exhaustion and heatstrokeInformation and advice for the public on heat exhaustion and heatstroke can be found on nhs.uk – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/>

DehydrationDehydration means your body loses more fluids than you take in. If it isn't treated it can get worse and become a serious problem. Babies, children and the elderly are more at risk of dehydration.

Further information and advice for the public on dehydration can be found on nhs.uk – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/>

Sun safetyInformation and advice for the public on sun safety can be found on nhs.uk – <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/sunscreen-and-sun-safety/>

**Sun safety for babies**Information specifically for babies is also on nhs.uk – <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/childrens-health/how-can-i-keep-my-baby-safe-during-hot-weather/>

Cover Up, Mate (Sun protection) – \*South of England onlyCover Up, Mate is an NHS England and Improvement campaign about safe sun exposure and reducing the risk of skin cancer. The campaign aims to encourage people who work outdoors, such as farmers, builders, gardeners and sports people, to take a safer approach to the sun in summer to help reduce the incidence of skin cancer.

The campaign will run between 22nd May - 30th August.

The target audience for 2019 has been extended to include women as well as focusing on men.

The communications plan is below and there are images for use via this link: <https://nhsi.kahootz.com/connect.ti/CommsLink/view?objectId=10788496>

Please contact Laura Dimmick at NHS England and Improvement if you have any questions about the campaign or issues accessing the materials - laura.dimmick@nhs.net



UVPHE operates a network of nine broadband UV monitoring stations in the UK and three overseas.

The monitoring stations record hourly updates of the level of UV measured which are then posted on Defra’s UK-AIR website - <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/uv-index-graphs>.

The video *The dangers of UV on our health’* is available on YouTube and may be useful to link to during times of high UV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cblhrVTnZUU>

# Recreation - including festivals

Food preparation and poisoningThe Food Standards Agency have lots of information and advice on their website around food preparation and handling.

There are pages about bacteria that cause food poisoning:

* Campylobacter – <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/campylobacter>
* Listeria – <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/listeria>
* Salmonella – <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/salmonella>
* Hepatitis E virus – <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/hepatitis-e-virus>
* E. coli – <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/e-coli>

Fruit and vegetable preparationIt is important to wash all fruit and vegetables before you eat them to ensure they are clean and safe to eat. Most people are aware of the importance of handling meat safely, but many consider the risk of food poisoning from vegetables to be low.

NHS.uk also has information about how to correctly prepare fruit and vegetables – <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-wash-fruit-and-vegetables/>

Carbon monoxide poisoningCarbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste. Breathing it in can make you unwell, and it can kill if you're exposed to high levels.Every year there are around 25 deaths from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning in England and Wales.<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Carbon-monoxide-poisoning/>

Sexual health/STIsResources for PHE’s ‘Protect against STIs’ campaign can be found on the PHE Campaign Resource Centre – <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/68-sexual-health/resources>

There is also information on STIs on nhs.uk – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/>

The Terrence Higgins Trust also has information about HIV and STIs – <https://www.tht.org.uk/>

DrugsInformation and advice about illegal drugs can be found on the Talk to Frank website - <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

## Alcohol

**Alcohol misuse**Alcohol misuse means drinking excessively – more than the lower-risk limits of alcohol consumption. Alcohol consumption is measured in units. A unit of alcohol is 10ml of pure alcohol, which is about:

* half a pint of normal-strength lager
* a single measure (25ml) of spirits
* A small glass (125ml) of wine contains about 1.5 units of alcohol.

To keep your risk of alcohol-related harm low, the NHS recommends:

* not regularly drinking more than 14 units of alcohol a week
* if you drink as much as 14 units a week, it's best to spread this evenly over three or more days
* if you're trying to reduce the amount of alcohol you drink, it's a good idea to have several alcohol-free days each week

Regular or frequent drinking means drinking alcohol most weeks. The risk to your health is increased by drinking any amount of alcohol on a regular basis.

Further information on alcohol misuse is on nhs.uk – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/>

**Alcohol poisoning**Alcohol poisoning occurs when a person drinks a toxic amount of alcohol, usually over a short period of time (binge drinking).

Being poisoned by alcohol can damage your health or even put your life in danger.

It's important to avoid misusing alcohol and to be aware of how much you're drinking and the effect this could have on your body.

More information on alcohol poisoning – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-poisoning/>

Infectious diseasesThere are many infectious diseases that can affect the population at any time, travel can also increase the risk of some of these diseases.

The PHE Infectious Diseases page has links to further information about many infectious diseases - <https://www.gov.uk/topic/health-protection/infectious-diseases>.

Measles/Mumps/MMR There continues to be an increase in cases of measles and mumps across England, particularly in young people over the age of 15 years. There are also several large measles outbreaks across Europe.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can sometimes lead to serious complications. It can be more severe in teenagers and adults than in children.

The best source of information about measles is on nhs.uk – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>

**Mumps**

Mumps is most recognisable by painful swellings at the side of the face under the ears.

There is more information about mumps on nhs.uk - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mumps/>

**MMR toolkit for festivals**

Mass gathering events like festivals can be hot spots for measles as they present the perfect opportunity for the infection to spread.

A toolkit has been prepared to assist festival organisers in getting messages to festival-goers before they attend the festivals including suggested tweets, messages and links to resources such as posters.

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**Value of Vaccines**

Value of Vaccines is a PHE led communications campaign with the aim to maintain high coverage in the childhood immunisations programme and reverse any downward trends in uptake.

It comes at a time when there is increased media and political interest around ‘anti-vax’ groups and movements, so the campaign also aims to remove the circumstances in which anti-vaccine groups’ activity can flourish (but the strategy remains not to tackle these groups head-on – we know that sharing a platform with anti-vaxxers gives them credibility and a voice that they do not warrant).

There is more information in the document below or contact PHE regional communications.

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**Value of Vaccines MMR festival graphics:**

<https://publichealthengland-immunisati.box.com/s/ysjgahbuicyc19iq3esomeczsaekwr0p>

<https://bit.ly/2QT7jcZ>

**Value of Vaccines timeline animation**:

<https://publichealthengland-immunisati.box.com/s/qliyea3052vxvsdqyjysxlmg160yagj6>

<https://bit.ly/2XA9h4C>

**General VoV assets:**

<https://publichealthengland-immunisati.app.box.com/s/2lneh197tag7ltnbqo5nhg78pgqb5n15>

## Festivals

There are hundreds of festivals taking place throughout the summer, but large gatherings of people can also mean health risks. Festival Medical Services have put together information and advice for those attending festivals to stay safe. <https://www.festival-medical.org/health-advice>

# Environmental / outdoor

**Open water swimming**This activity is growing in popularity in the UK but open water swimming can increase the risk of gastrointestinal infections (diarrhoea and/or vomiting) as well as respiratory, skin, ear and eye infections. Most symptoms of these illnesses will generally be mild, caused by organisms such as norovirus, giardia and cryptosporidium. However, there is also a risk of more severe infections caused by organisms such as E. coli O157 which may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and leptospirosis, which can cause liver and kidney problems.

There is a PHE leaflet about open water swimming (swimming in lakes, rivers and reservoirs) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/swim-healthy-leaflet>

Advice – <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-on-reducing-the-risk-of-illness-when-open-water-swimming>

Reservoir / lake swimmingThe South East is served by many water companies, some of which have prepared information and advice for the public about the dangers of reservoir and lake swimming. The key messages from these resources are:

* Swimming in reservoirs is dangerous. These are operational sites and even the strongest swimmers can get into serious difficulties.
* Reservoirs are incredibly deep in places, but very shallow in others – particularly as water levels drop over the summer – making jumping in or swimming extremely dangerous.
* The water temperature stays very low and can cause shock or hypothermia. The water also hides other dangers such as machinery, sudden dips and drops, weeds and mud, and very strong currents created by the changing depths and continuous pumping of water.

**Materials on water safety
Thames Water**<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/sitecore/content/corporate/corporate/about-us/community/great-days-out/recreational-sites/water-safety>

**Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents**

<https://www.rospa.com/leisure-safety/water/advice/children-young-people/>

**Royal Life Saving Society**

<https://www.rlss.org.uk/pages/category/water-safety-information>

**Royal National Lifeboat Institution**

<https://rnli.org/safety/respect-the-water> and <https://rnli.org/safety>

Physical activity challengesThroughout the year, thousands of people participate in extreme physical activity challenges such as Tough Mudder, competing in such challenges may expose participants to a number of health risks. Tough Mudder have prepared this webpage with advice for those taking part in their challenges - other organisers of similar events may have done the same: <https://toughmudder.co.uk/content/event-safety>.

If local authorities are aware of an event taking place in their area, it might be useful to share this link ahead of the event, especially if the weather is due to be hot or reaching alert levels.

TicksTicks are small, spider like creatures that feed on the blood of animals, including people. During this feeding process, they can transmit pathogens that can result in infections such as Lyme Disease.

There is a dedicated page of resources including a toolkit to raise awareness of the potential risks created by ticks and tick-borne disease in England.

The page also includes a useful video, posters, leaflets and information about the tick surveillance scheme – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tick-bite-risks-and-prevention-of-lyme-disease>

Giant Hogweed
Although an impressive sight when fully grown, giant hogweed is invasive and potentially harmful. Chemicals in the sap can cause photodermatitis or photosensitivity, where the skin becomes very sensitive to sunlight and may suffer blistering, pigmentation and long-lasting scars.

Further information is on the RHS website <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=458>

**Blue-Green Algae**Blue-green algae are a type of bacteria (called cyanbacteria) that share some of the same characteristics as plants. Blue-green algae exist all over the world and are found naturally in many inland waters, estuaries and the sea.

The algae are very small and can’t be seen with the naked eye unless they are concentrated into clumps when they can look like green flakes, greenish bundles or brown dots in the water.

**What are the health risks?**Blue-green algae are capable of producing several different toxins. People may be exposed to these toxins through contact with the skin (e.g. when swimming), through inhalation (e.g. when motor boating or water skiing), or by swallowing contaminated water.

These toxins can cause skin rashes, nausea, vomiting, stomach pains, fever and headaches. Occasionally they can cause more serious illness such as liver and brain damage. Children are at greater risk than adults of developing problems because of their comparative lower body weight.

**How can the health risks be minimised?**Not all blue-green algae blooms and scums are toxic but it is not possible to tell from appearance and so it’s best to assume they are harmful and take the following precautions:

* Do not swim in the water
* Do not swallow the water
* Avoid contact with the algae
* Do not eat fish caught from the water
* Observe and abide by any warning notices positioned around the water

Anyone who has come into contact with water containing blue-green algae should shower with fresh water immediately. Anyone who has come into contact with affected water and has become ill should obtain medical attention.

The toxins which may be produced by algae are also poisonous to animals and can cause severe illness and death. Farmers and pet owners should ensure that their animals do not have access to affected water.

For more information visit – <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/53916>

Petting farms and animals that have just given birthVisiting a farm is an enjoyable and educational experience for many people, particularly children. However, such visits can never be free from all risks. Farm animals may carry a number of infections that can be harmful to people, and so farms that are open to the public are expected to provide hand washing facilities and urge all visitors to wash their hands thoroughly after visiting and before eating food.

In order to protect their own health and that of their unborn child, women who are, or who may be, pregnant should be advised to avoid close contact with livestock animals.

PHE have produced leaflets that include information on:

* how to avoid infection
* what to do if you feel unwell
* the risks of E. coli O157

Farm visits: avoiding infection leaflet – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farm-visits-avoiding-infection>

Leaflet with advice for pregnant women – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pregnancy-advice-on-contact-with-animals-that-are-giving-birth>

## Air pollution

PHE provides advice to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on the health effects of air pollution. Whilst most people will not be affected by short term peaks in air pollution, some individuals, particularly vulnerable groups such as those with existing heart or lung conditions, may experience increased symptoms.

Up-to-date information on air pollution levels and related health advice for specific area can be obtained via the Defra website <http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk>, or by calling Defra’s freephone helpline on 0800 556677.

TravelMany people will leave the UK for their summer holiday, which may includes some potential risks.

A list of travel health questions can be found on nhs.uk –<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/travel-health/>

An A-Z of countries with advice and information for travellers can be found on the Foreign Office’s travel advice page – <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website also has health information and advice for travellers – <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheets>