

High temperatures prompt need for extra precaution this summer

Whānau Āwhina Plunket is urging parents and caregivers to take extra care with pēpi and tamariki in the heat, as scorching temperatures are recorded across the country this summer.

Chief Nurse Dr Zoe Tipa says pēpi and tamariki get hotter a lot faster than adults. In high temperatures like we've been experiencing, they can rapidly lose body fluids through sweating, which can lead to dehydration. This is especially dangerous for small children.

“Symptoms of dehydration include: a dry mouth, lips and tongue, fewer wet nappies than usual or dark coloured urine, no tears when crying or sunken eyes, cold hands and feet, mottled bluish skin, an unusual lack of energy, or your child may be sleepy or difficult to wake,” she says.

“If your child has these signs, visit your doctor or an after-hours clinic immediately, or call 111 for an ambulance. You can also call PlunketLine 24/7 on 0800 933 922 for advice if you're not sure.”

Dr Tipa says there are ways to help keep your little one cool and hydrated at home or out and about. Some top tips are:

- Dress your child in light, breathable clothing, and try to stay in parts of the house where it's cool.
- If you go outside, stick to the shade and remember wide-brimmed hats and SPF 50+ sunscreen.
- Offer fluids regularly, whether this is breastmilk or formula for babies or water for older children.
- At night you can cool the room by hanging wet towels over chairs or windows and letting the air pass through them.
- Sleeping in natural fabrics like cotton and wool is ideal as they are breathable, help keep the body at the right temperature and absorb moisture like sweat.
- Check the temperature of car seats, harnesses and seat belts before your child gets into the car. Hot metal, plastic or leather can burn. If surfaces are hot, cover them with a damp cloth and then help your child into the car. It can be a good idea to cover car seats when you're not using them.
- Use shades on your car windows to protect your child from the sun if your windows don't have tinting. Putting a hood or bonnet over a capsule to protect a baby from the sun reduces air circulation.

For more information on managing heat and dehydration, Whānau Āwhina Plunket has a Live Chat available: [Managing tamariki in hot weather](#)

You can also visit a [Sun safety](#) page on the Whānau Āwhina Plunket website.





ENDS

For more information, please contact:

Meg Maher

Communications Advisor

M: 027 214 9262, media@plunket.org.nz

ENDS

About Whānau Āwhina Plunket

Pēpi, tamariki and whānau are at the heart of Whānau Āwhina Plunket. The charity is Aotearoa New Zealand's largest health and wellbeing support service for tamariki – seeing 290,000 under-fives. About 80% of newborns are enrolled with Whānau Āwhina Plunket each year.

Our nurses provide clinical assessments, and along with Kaiāwhina and Community Karitāne, support whānau and families, through home and clinic visits, as well as PlunketLine 0800 933 922, a free 24/7 telephone advice service for parents.

Our website plunket.org.nz is one of the country's most widely read digital child health resources, with 1.8 million visits each year. It is available data-free through the Zero Data portal at zero.govt.nz, and you can choose to view it in English or te reo Māori.