

ASK THE EXPERT

In our new feature, City Kids asks your health and well-being questions to a panel of experienced professionals.

WHAT'S

THE BEST WAY TO TREAT SUNBURN?

Sunburn is probably the first thing we worry about when taking our little ones out on a hot day so of course we slather on the factor 50+ and pop a hat on! Sunburn is often a superficial burn to the outer layer of skin: it will be red, sore and swollen. If it looks raw and blistered, this indicates a more serious burn that's damaged 2 or 3 layers of skin.

Mild sunburn can most likely be treated at home using the following steps:

- Move the child indoors or to a shaded area and cool the skin with a cool shower or a cool, wet towels. Never cool the skin with ice.
- Have the child drink plenty of fluids. Ice pops come in handy here!
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen could be taken according to recommended age and dosage to help with any pain.

For more severe sunburn which can include blistering, swelling, fever and chills, children may need hospital treatment with medication and dressings.

- Never burst the blisters, cool as before and cover loosely with cling film.
- Headaches, vomiting and dizziness could also indicate heatstroke, sunstroke or heat exhaustion so a medical assessment will be required.

Of course, the best way to treat sunburn is to prevent it completely. Babies under six months should always be kept shaded and out of direct sunlight. Children should wear suitable clothing, a hat and sun lotion which includes both UVA and UVB protection and ideally only play in the shade.

WHEN

CAN I START TO BRUSH MY BABY'S TEETH?

It's best to start healthy habits straightaway and start cleaning baby teeth as soon as they appear. As baby teeth have a thinner outer layer of enamel than adult teeth they are more vulnerable to decay. Most babies start teething at around six months.

We recommend starting to introduce them to the idea of cleaning when teething by wiping their gums and teeth using a piece of clean gauze or soft washcloth. A lot of parents also find Brush-Baby Dental Wipes helpful. They contain Xylitol - a natural sweetener that is good for teeth (yes, really!), because it helps reduce the growth of decay-causing bacteria.

As soon as your child's teeth start to come through, introduce them to a small soft toothbrush, brushing regularly as part of your child's morning and night-time routine, using a smear of fluoride toothpaste (with at least 1000ppm fluoride) until they are three years of age. After this time, you can use a small pea-sized amount (with at least 1350ppm fluoride). All children should be supervised with their brushing until they are seven years of age.

Children love to imitate their parents, so it's great to set a good example and get into the habit of brushing your teeth in front of your child: by showing them how you clean your teeth, they'll soon want to copy you!

Helping your children establish good tooth brushing habits is the key to a lifetime of healthy, happy smiles.

HOW SOON

CAN I INTRODUCE A BOTTLE? I'M DESPERATE FOR SOME SLEEP!

Sleep deprivation is used as a form of torture so it's no surprise that new mums are willing to part with a lot of money for baby sleep aids - we've all made desperate online purchases at 2am!

Firstly, take comfort in the fact your baby is doing what is natural and **normal**. Regular wake-ups to feed help establish your milk supply, as well as helping prevent engorgement and mastitis. Growth spurts and brain development all lead to your baby wanting to feed - often what feels like constantly!

If you want to introduce a bottle, consider waiting for your breastfeeding to become 'established' - this can take up to six weeks. Any earlier may affect your supply of milk or cause nipple confusion (the latch for your baby to breastfeed differs from the one for a bottle feed). My advice would be to get your partner to give a bottle at around 9-10pm, allowing you to go to bed early. If you express the milk for this feed it won't have such an effect on your breast milk supply and risks of engorgement.

As well as introducing a bottle, you can also step up your self-care:

- Consider cancelling that lunch you're too tired for and put your pyjamas back on - research shows that short power naps can be just as beneficial as longer sleeps.
- Ask friends and family for help
- Reach out to other mums. It's an amazing comfort to realise you're not the only one awake for a 3am night feed.

You know you're a new mum when your biscuit intake is through the roof and you smell like a coffee bean. Reassure yourself that your experience is normal, and this phase will pass.



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