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Breastfeeding and travel

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Summary

- Breastfeeding in public is considered offensive in a few countries, so check beforehand to avoid unpleasant attention.
- In developing countries, avoid travelling with a baby outside major centres – the risk of disease is higher and it can be difficult to find good medical facilities.
- Dehydration and illness (such as travellers' diarrhoea) may temporarily reduce your milk supply.

Breastmilk is instantly on hand and contains immune factors, so it is the safest food and drink for your baby while travelling. If your baby is exclusively breastfed, you won't have to worry about unclean water supplies or sterilising bottles.

In developing countries, avoid travelling with a baby outside major centres. There is a higher risk of disease and it can be difficult to find good medical facilities.

Cultural sensitivity when breastfeeding

Most families with babies are travelling to visit and stay with family and friends. If this is the case, you will most likely know what is normal and polite in the country you are visiting. Babies are welcome in most places, and can be a great way of helping you interact with people you may meet on your travels.

Breastfeeding in public is generally accepted, but people in some countries may consider it offensive. Before travelling, check with the Australian embassy in the country you are visiting, or with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. A discreetly placed bunny rug or shawl is very useful when breastfeeding in a public place.

Immunisation and breastfeeding

See your doctor to discuss vaccinations before you travel. Your doctor may suggest giving your baby the routine vaccinations earlier. Research suggests that vaccinations are safe for mothers and babies. But it is not possible to vaccinate a newborn baby against some diseases, such as yellow fever, and breastmilk will only offer limited protection. Unless you really must travel, it may be wiser to delay your trip until your baby is older.

Malaria and breastfeeding

If you are travelling to a place where malaria is present, you will need to take anti-malarial medications. Small amounts of this medication will be passed to your baby through your breastmilk. Doctors do not think this is harmful. But the medication your baby receives in milk will not be enough to protect them against malaria. Before you travel, discuss with your doctor which medications and dosages will be suitable for your baby.

Malaria is spread by mosquitoes. While travelling, take extra care to avoid mosquito bites. Suggestions include:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Make sure your baby's skin is well covered with clothes.
- Wear insect repellent.
- Do not put insect repellent on your baby's hands, as they may swallow the lotion if they suck their fingers.
- Use insect sprays or mosquito coils in your room.
- Sleep under mosquito nets (both you and your baby).

Other medications while breastfeeding

Both prescription and over-the-counter medications, including herbal medications, can be passed to your baby through your breastmilk. Generally the amounts are so small that taking the medications is usually okay when you are breastfeeding. Only take medications prescribed or recommended by your doctor who knows you are breastfeeding.

If possible, take with you all the (safe) over-the-counter medications you think you may need during your trip. Remember that other countries may not have familiar brands, and what you assume to be a suitable substitute may not be a good thing to take while breastfeeding.

Maintaining breastmilk supply when travelling

Some women find their milk supply temporarily decreases at times during their trip. This could be due to dehydration after flying or illness (such as travellers' diarrhoea) or because there are fewer opportunities to breastfeed.

It may help if you:

- Continue to breastfeed as often as your baby wants
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids, especially on long-distance flights
- Avoid caffeinated drinks

- Don't smoke
- Avoid smoky environments
- Get enough rest
- Plan plenty of rest breaks and feed breaks
- Drink more water if you get travellers' diarrhoea.

Tips for breastfeeding when travelling

Suggestions include:

- Ask friends or your travel agent for advice on child-friendly airlines. Some airlines are more accommodating than others.
- Ask your travel agent for suggestions on airline travel with children.
- Speak directly with the airline if you have questions or concerns.
- Be aware that water does not come to a full boil on aeroplanes. Make sure you can breastfeed, or take sterile water with you if you need to make up infant formula.
- If you are unsure whether baby products will be available at your destination, take enough supplies to last you the whole trip. Take sachets of an oral rehydration product (to treat fluid and electrolyte loss) in case you or your baby gets diarrhoea.
- If your baby gets diarrhoea when travelling, keep breastfeeding. It is fine to go back to exclusive breastfeeding for a while until your baby is better.
- If you express milk, take your own equipment (such as breast pump) with you. Remember to take a power point adaptor if your breast pump is electric.
- If you are travelling alone, ask the airline if they can give you an 'assistant' to help you at each stop. For example, the staff member might collect your luggage and help you on and off the plane.
- While travelling by plane, try to time your baby's feeds so they are drinking during take-off and landing. This will help avoid ear pain caused by changes in cabin pressure.
- Thieves tend to target women travelling with young children, because mothers are often distracted and not able to hold on to their handbags. Carry your valuables on your body, such as in a neck pouch or money-belt worn under your clothes.
- Carrying your baby in a sling or specially designed backpack baby carrier can make it easier to get around in places like airports, train stations and bus terminals. You will also know exactly where your baby or toddler is, and that they are safe and secure, where they can gain comfort from being close to you.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Australian Breastfeeding Association Breastfeeding Helpline Tel. 1800 686 268
- Travel agent
- Airline
- Australian embassies
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Tel. (03) 9221 5555
- Travel guidebook with information on travelling with children

Things to remember

- Breastfeeding in public is considered offensive in a few countries, so check beforehand to avoid unpleasant attention.
- In developing countries, avoid travelling with a baby outside major centres – the risk of disease is higher and it can be difficult to find good medical facilities.
- Dehydration and illness (such as travellers' diarrhoea) may temporarily reduce your milk supply.

References

- *Tips for women travellers*, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. [More information here.](#)
- *Travel and breastfeeding, Travelers' Health*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA. [More information here.](#)

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[There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria...](#)

- [Early support for a child with disabilities](#)

[For children diagnosed with a disability, getting the support they need as early as possible will give them the best chance of minimising the long-term effects of the disability...](#)

- [Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need](#)

[Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influenced by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation...](#)

- [Maternal and child health services](#)

[Your local maternal and child health service will be a great source of support after your baby is born...](#)

- [No Jab No Play](#)

[No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...](#)

- [Parenting services](#)

[Parenting is one of the most important tasks we undertake but it doesn't always come naturally...](#)

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[Detail on baby skin care from Royal Women's Hospital...](#)

- [Jaundice in babies](#)

[If your baby is full-term and healthy, mild jaundice is nothing to worry about and will resolve by itself within a week or so...](#)

- [Newborn bloodspot screening](#)

[Every newborn baby in Australia is offered a newborn bloodspot screening test to identify those at risk of rare, but serious, medical conditions...](#)

- [Phenylketonuria \(PKU\)](#)

[PKU is an inherited disorder that prevents the normal breakdown of a protein found in some foods...](#)

- [Phototherapy at Home](#)

[Jaundice is very common in newborns, so it's nothing to be too worried about. Treatment is very easy and safe. It all happens using blue light from a special blanket that you wrap your baby in. The...](#)

- [Premature babies](#)

[Sometimes premature labour can be delayed to increase a baby's chance of survival...](#)

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Feeding your baby

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[Pregnant women with asthma need to continue to take their asthma medication as it is important to the health of both mother and baby that the mother's asthma is well managed...](#)
- [Baby care - weaning](#)
[Be guided by your baby and let them set the pace when weaning and introducing solid foods...](#)
- [Bottle feeding - nutrition and safety](#)
[Breastmilk or commercial infant formula is necessary for all babies less than 12 months...](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)
[Breastfeeding positioning and attachment come naturally to some babies and mothers, but many need time and practice to get it right...](#)
- [Breastfeeding and travel](#)
[Breastmilk protects your baby from illness and infection, so it is the safest drink for your baby while travelling...](#)
- [Breastfeeding and work](#)
[You can successfully combine breastfeeding with work if you have support from your employer, colleagues and family...](#)
- [Breastfeeding and your diet](#)
[Breastfeeding women need to eat regularly and include a wide variety of healthy foods in their diet...](#)
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[Mastitis affects some breastfeeding women and may be caused by blocked milk ducts or a bacterial infection...](#)
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[It is up to you and your baby to decide when breastfeeding should stop...](#)
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[Let your baby feed as much as they want in the first few days to help establish good breastfeeding patterns...](#)
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[Breastfeeding within the first hour after birth allows your baby to behave instinctively and breastfeed with little intervention...](#)
- [Food for babies - tucker talk tips](#)
[Before six months, breastmilk or formula is the only food and drink that your baby needs...](#)
- [Lactose intolerance](#)
[Symptoms of lactose intolerance include bloating, gas, abdominal pain and diarrhoea...](#)

Growth and development

- [Child development \(1\) - newborn to three months](#)
[Infants in the first eight weeks have no control over their movements and all their physical activity is involuntary or reflex...](#)
- [Child development \(2\) - three to six months](#)
[Young babies still have a notion that the whole of life is happening inside themselves, and they are 'making it all happen'...](#)
- [Child development \(3\) - six to nine months](#)
[Fun activities, such as shaking or banging objects, helps a baby understand they have an effect on the world...](#)
- [Child development \(4\) - nine to 12 months](#)
[At nine months your baby is moving around by crawling or pulling along with their arms. Safety is very important now. Your baby is also 'talking' with recognisable sounds and may even say simple words...](#)

- [Child development \(5\) - one to two years](#)
[Between the age of one and two, your toddler understands they are a completely separate person from you...](#)
- [Children's feet and shoes](#)
[A child learning to walk receives important sensory information from the soles of their feet, and shoes can make walking more difficult...](#)
- [Growth charts for children](#)
[Babies and young children do not usually grow in a perfectly smooth way, but instead grow in 'bursts'...](#)
- [Teeth development in children](#)
[Teething symptoms are common in children and can be managed without medications...](#)
- [The Maternal and Child Health phone app](#)
[The Maternal & Child Health app \(MCH\) provides reliable maternal and child health \(MCH\) information that families can use every day...](#)
- [Toilet training](#)
[When toilet training your toddler, praise every little success and remain calm about accidents...](#)

Behaviour and learning

- [10 tips for managing sibling rivalry](#)
[Teach your children to sort out minor differences themselves... 10 tips for managing sibling rivalry...](#)
- [10 tips to raise an optimistic child](#)
[Be a positive role model ... 10 tips to raise an optimistic child...](#)
- [Anxiety and fear in children](#)
[You can help your child overcome anxiety by taking their fears seriously and encouraging them to talk about their feelings...](#)
- [Children and shyness](#)
[If your child's shyness is especially debilitating, you may like to consider professional help from a counsellor or psychologist...](#)
- [Children and sibling rivalry](#)
[Sibling rivalry is a common problem, particularly among children who are the same sex and close together in age...](#)
- [Discipline and children](#)
[Disciplining your child means teaching them responsible behaviour and self-control...](#)
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[Dummy sucking should stop before school age to avoid teeth or mouth problems...](#)
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[If your child is naturally left-handed, don't try to force them to use their right hand...](#)
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[When a young child is having a tantrum, it is because the emotional \(limbic system\) part of the brain is dominating the child's behaviour...](#)
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- [Breakfast](#)

[Children who skip breakfast may lack sufficient vitamins and minerals including iron, calcium, zinc and vitamin B2...](#)

- [Childcare and healthy eating](#)

[Childcare centres should provide healthy meals for your children...](#)

- [Children's diet - fruit and vegetables](#)

[If you eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, your child may eventually follow your lead...](#)

- [Eating tips for babies](#)

[First foods for babies can be prepared easily and cheaply at home without salt, seasonings and sweeteners...](#)

- [Eating tips for children \(3\) - older toddlers](#)

[Offer children the same foods as the family, with a variety of textures and flavours for balanced nutrition...](#)

- [Eating tips for young toddlers](#)

[Children have a natural ability to sense when they are hungry and when they are full...](#)

- [Soft drinks, juice and sweet drinks - children](#)

[Encourage children to drink and enjoy water. Sweet drinks such as juice, cordial and soft drinks may cause health problems for children if consumed in large amounts...](#)

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[Children should have an oral health check by the time they turn two...](#)

- [Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia \(video\)](#)

[Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved...](#)

- [Melissa's story \(video\)](#)

[Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old...](#)

- [No Jab No Play](#)

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[If your child is old enough, involve them in planning a trip so they can get excited about it...](#)

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[Parents and children talk about some of the factors that can cause a child's asthma to flare up...](#)

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[Children with back pain may grow into adults with chronic bad backs, so it is important to encourage sensible back care...](#)

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[Bedwetting is a problem for many children and punishing them for it will only add to their distress...](#)

- [Bronchiolitis](#)

[Bronchiolitis is a common chest infection in babies under six months of age...](#)

- [Colic](#)

[Caring for a crying baby with colic can be stressful, so take some time out to calm down...](#)

- [Constipation and children](#)

[A healthy diet, plenty of fluids, exercise and regular toilet habits can help relieve constipation in children...](#)

- [Cradle cap](#)

[Cradle cap is not contagious and it is not caused by poor hygiene or bad parenting...](#)

- [Croup](#)

[Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough...](#)

- [Fever - children](#)

[Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness...](#)

- [Gastroenteritis in children](#)

[Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea \(runny or watery poo\) and...](#)

- [Nappy rash](#)

[Most babies get nappy rash at some stage, no matter how well they are cared for...](#)

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- [Roseola infantum](#)

[Roseola is a mild viral infection with associated fever and rash that affects babies and young children...](#)

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[Sleeping habits are learned, so try to set up a bedtime routine for your baby as soon as you can...](#)

- [Sleep - children and naps](#)

[A child needs a daytime nap until they are around two and a half to three years of age...](#)

- [Sleep - children and nightmares](#)

[Your child may have only a few scary dreams a year, or be troubled by nightmares much more often...](#)

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[Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets...](#)

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[Most injuries to babies do not occur by chance - many are predictable and largely preventable...](#)

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[Even if your baby furniture meets every safety standard and recommendation, your child still needs close supervision...](#)

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- [Child safety and injury prevention](#)

[By making a few practical changes to your home, you can dramatically reduce the risk of injury to your child...](#)

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[The best way to reduce the risk of injury to children is to remove a potentially dangerous item or add a safety product...](#)

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[Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to experience emotional and behavioural problems...](#)

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[Children who live on farms are at greater risk of injury and death than their parents or other farm workers...](#)

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[Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration...](#)

- [Playgrounds and child safety](#)

[Play environments can be safe and beneficial for your child. With proper planning, you can make sure your child gets plenty of playtime activity...](#)

- [Poisoning and child safety](#)

[Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 immediately if you suspect your child has been poisoned or given the wrong medicine or the wrong dose of medicine...](#)

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[Child Protection provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children from harm caused by abuse within the family...](#)

- [Death of a baby](#)

[Miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death is a shattering event for those expecting a baby, and for their families. Grief, relationship stresses and anxiety about subsequent pregnancies are common in...](#)

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[Babies and toddlers can be as affected by trauma as any other family member...](#)

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- [Trauma and children - two to five years](#)

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Related Information

- [No Jab No Play](#)

No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...

- [Bird flu \(avian influenza\)](#)

The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza...

- [Flu \(influenza\) – immunisation](#)

Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high risk groups...

- [Travel and holidays](#)

Travel health, travel and health conditions, travel tips and holiday stress...

- [When you get back](#)

Come back healthy and protect your family, friends and community from disease...

[Home](#)

Related information on other websites

- [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#)
- [Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Smartraveller: women](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Travel recommendations for the nursing mother](#)

Content Partner

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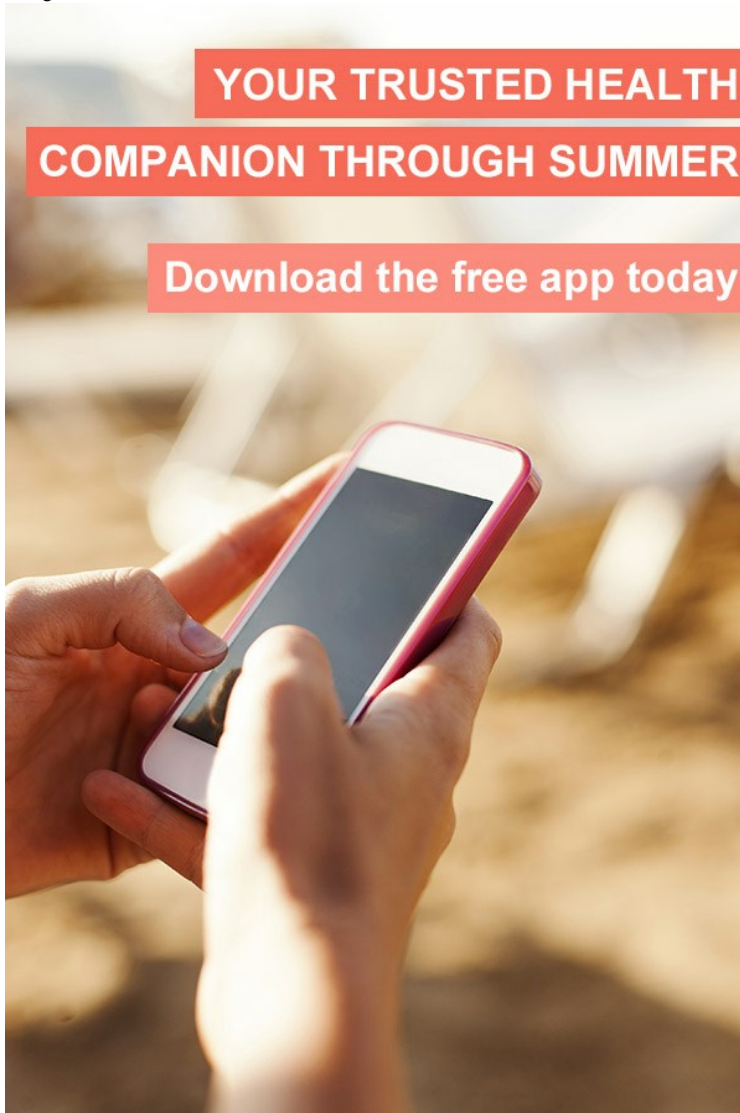
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Better Summer Guide

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Hot summer topics

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- [Getting active this Summer](#)
- [Healthy eating know-how](#)
- [Hot weather health](#)
- [Keeping food safe in summer](#)
- [Managing holiday season stress](#)
- [Parties and playing it safe](#)
- [Summer first aid basics](#)

Getting active this Summer

- [Personal trainers – how to choose one](#)
[Make sure your personal trainer is properly qualified before entering into any agreement...](#)
- [Fitness centres – how to choose one](#)
[Do some research before signing up at a fitness centre...](#)
- [Physical activity – how to get started](#)
[If you've been inactive and want to begin physical activity, see a doctor first...](#)
- [Gardening for children](#)
[Children can learn new skills, have fun and develop self-confidence when they grow their own plants...](#)
- [Physical activity – choosing the one for you](#)
[You are more likely to keep up a healthy lifestyle change if your chosen activity suits you...](#)
- [Walking tips](#)
[Walking is an excellent form of exercise for people of all ages and abilities...](#)
- [Exercise programs](#)
[If you are unfamiliar with what is involved, starting an exercise program can be challenging...](#)
- [Physical activity – setting yourself goals](#)
[When you're trying to become more physically active, set realistic health and fitness goals...](#)
- [Heat stress and exercise](#)
[Heat stress occurs when sweat can't evaporate fast enough to keep the body sufficiently cool during physical activity...](#)

Healthy eating know-how

- [Food variety and a healthy diet](#)
[If you eat a variety of good food, your diet will provide you with adequate nutrition...](#)
- [Summer fruits are here! \(video\)](#)
[Summer is a great time of year to enjoy a range of fresh fruits and vegetables...](#)
- [10 tips for healthy shopping](#)
[Make a shopping list for healthier food choices ... 10 tips for healthy shopping...](#)
- [Cooking tips for busy people](#)
[If you lack the time or motivation to cook, try these tips...](#)
- [10 tips to cut down on alcohol](#)
[Keep track of your drinking habits ... 10 tips to cut down on alcohol...](#)
- [Nutrition – Summer fruit and vegetables \(video\)](#)
[Salads are a great way for you achieve your 5 serves of vegies every day...](#)
- [Eating out – healthy food from different cultures \(video\)](#)
[Nutritionist Shane Bilsborough takes us on a tour of Melbourne's restaurants. Some popular food from different cultures is high in fat and kilojoules. There are,](#)

[however, some healthy alternatives...](#)

- [Soft drinks, juice and sweet drinks – limit intake](#)

[Consumption of drinks containing added sugar is associated with weight gain, reduced bone strength and tooth erosion and decay...](#)

- [Healthy eating tips](#)

[A good balance between exercise and food intake is important to maintain a healthy body weight...](#)

Hot weather health

- [Heat stress and heat-related illness](#)

[Heat kills more Australians than any natural disaster. Find out how you can treat and prevent heat-related illness...](#)

- [How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat](#)

[Know the effects of extreme heat, who is at risk and how you can prepare yourself and others...](#)

- [Heat stress and exercise](#)

[Heat stress occurs when sweat can't evaporate fast enough to keep the body sufficiently cool during physical activity...](#)

- [Heat stress and older people](#)

[People aged 65 years and over are at increased risk of heat-related illnesses and need special care in hot weather...](#)

- [Sunburn](#)

[Even mild sunburn can cause permanent skin damage and may increase your risk of skin cancer...](#)

- [Heat stress – preventing heatstroke](#)

[Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency that can be avoided by following simple prevention measures...](#)

- [Hot weather and child safety](#)

[Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration...](#)

Keeping food safe in summer

- [Food safety when shopping](#)

[When you shop, choose, pack and transport food carefully...](#)

- [Food – use-by and best-before dates](#)

[Check the 'use-by' or 'best before' date when you buy food...](#)

- [Food safety outdoors](#)

[Food poisoning is a real risk when taking food outside the home, especially in warmer weather...](#)

- [Food safety when eating out](#)

[If you have any doubt about the safety of food when you're out, don't eat it...](#)

- [Food safety and storage](#)

[High-risk food should be kept at 5 °C or below, and above 60 °C to avoid the temperature danger zone and food poisoning...](#)

- [Be savvy with food this summer \(slideshow\)](#)

[How to keep food fresh and safe in warmer weather...](#)

- [Don't let food poisoning ruin your summer \(slideshow\)](#)

[How to avoid food poisoning this summer...](#)

Managing holiday season stress

- [Christmas can be stressful](#)

[The expense of gifts and food, the pressure of shopping, and the expectations of the season can make Christmas an extremely stressful time...](#)

- [Christmas – tips to reduce the stress](#)

[Christmas doesn't have to be a financial headache if you plan ahead...](#)

- [Holiday stress](#)

[Holidays are supposed to offer relaxation and recuperation, but some people find them disappointingly stressful...](#)

- [Family conflict](#)

[It is normal to disagree with each other from time to time and occasional conflict is part of family life...](#)

Parties and playing it safe

- [10 tips to cut down on alcohol](#)

[Keep track of your drinking habits ... 10 tips to cut down on alcohol...](#)

- [Drink spiking](#)

[Slipping alcohol or drugs into a friend's drink as a joke is against the law...](#)

- [Alcohol explained](#)

[The size of a standard drink can vary according to the type of alcohol...](#)

- [Partying safely – tips for parents](#)

[With a few simple plans in place, a good time can be had by all at a teenage party – even the parents...](#)

- [Partying safely and sex](#)

[Partying is fun but being out of it on alcohol or drugs can put you at risk of unwanted or unsafe sex...](#)

- [Partying safely – tips for teenagers](#)

[Don't advertise a party via SMS or the internet to limit the risk of gate-crashers and violent situations...](#)

Summer first aid basics

- [Skin cuts and abrasions](#)

[The body begins repairing a wound immediately and the process may continue for days, weeks, months or even years...](#)

- [Calling triple zero \(000\)](#)

[Call triple zero \(000\) in an emergency for ambulance, fire or police services...](#)

- [After-hours healthcare options](#)

[For unexpected after-hours medical issues, there are telephone helplines, pharmacies, after-hours medical clinics or doctors who can visit you at home...](#)

- [Sprains and strains](#)

[It is important to get the correct treatment for a sprain or strain as soon as possible after the injury to help you recover quickly...](#)

- [First aid kits](#)

[Your first aid kit should be organised, properly stocked and available at all times...](#)

- [First aid basics and DRSABCD](#)

[Some knowledge of basic first aid can mean the difference between life and death...](#)

- [Sunburn](#)

[Even mild sunburn can cause permanent skin damage and may increase your risk of skin cancer...](#)

- [Bites and stings – first aid](#)

[If you are bitten or stung by an insect or animal, apply first aid and seek medical treatment as soon as possible...](#)



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