

# Be extra alert on roads during darker months

Date published: 27 October 2017

All road users are urged to be extra alert on the roads over the coming months. We should all pay attention in the worsening weather conditions and the darker evenings during late autumn and winter.

## Road safety advice

While visibility decreases in winter months, stopping distances increase. If you're a driver you should:

- adjust your [speed](#)
- think about how the conditions affect more vulnerable [road users](#)
- slow down and pay attention, especially around schools buses when children are getting on and off
- be extra careful to watch out for people walking, cycling or riding a motorbike – they are much more difficult to see, particularly in the dark

Cyclists, motorcyclists, and pedestrians (including children) should take extra precautions by making sure they increase their own visibility to drivers by wearing:

- bright or contrasting clothing by day
- reflective clothing at night

You can get more information about road safety at the page below:

Collectively, we have the ability to reduce road casualties. We all have a personal responsibility, to ourselves and to other road users.

Remember – respect everyone's journey.

## More useful links

Share this page

## Feedback

Would you like to leave feedback about this page? [Send us your feedback](#)

---

# Take steps to keep children safe from burns and scalds

It's important that parents, relatives and carers are aware of the hazards which can lead to burns and scalds, and take steps to make sure children are kept safe.

## **Reduce the risk of accidents**

Accidents can happen quickly in or around the home, sometimes it takes just seconds, and occasionally these can lead to burns and scalds.

But these accidents can easily be prevented by being aware of the dangers and hazards that are in the home, and taking steps to reduce the risks and make the home as safe as possible.

Hot appliances, liquids, and bath water are responsible for more than half of all burns and scalds, with young children being particularly vulnerable.

Be aware that:

- hot drinks can still scald 15 minutes after they've been made and can result in years of skin graft treatment – make sure hot drinks are out of reach of babies and children
- hot water scalds in seconds – run the cold water first and always check the temperature of bath water
- hair straighteners can get very hot very quickly and cause serious burns that scar for life – keep out of the reach of children and put them away safely after use

You can get more advice, including a video showing the dangers in the home, at this link:

Prevention is always better than a cure.

## **More useful links**

Share this page

---

# Put safety first at Halloween

Put safety first this Halloween to make sure it's a night for treats not tragedies. Fireworks and sparklers can be dangerous, so make sure they are used safely and in line with the manufacturer's instructions. Follow the Firework Code.

## **Fireworks can be dangerous**

Plan any firework display in advance to make it both safe and enjoyable. Anyone wishing to buy or use fireworks must have [a licence](#).

Although fireworks are entertaining and exciting, if not properly handled they can be extremely dangerous and can result in injuries, often serious ones.

Fireworks should only be lit in a safe and controlled environment by a responsible adult. You should:

- follow the Firework Code
- only buy fireworks marked with a CE mark – this shows fireworks meet European Safety Standards
- not drink alcohol if setting off fireworks
- keep fireworks in a closed box when not in use and keep away from anything that could cause them to light
- follow the manufacturer's advice on each firework and use them one at a time
- light them at arm's length using a taper and stand well back
- never go near a firework that has been lit, even if it hasn't gone off – it could still explode
- never put fireworks in their pocket or throw them
- always supervise children around fireworks
- keep pets and animals indoors – the flames and noise upset them
- not set off noisy fireworks late at night and never after 11.00 pm

There's more information about firework safety on the page below:

Fireworks can cause fear and distress, especially amongst older people and more vulnerable members of the community.

You are also reminded of the traumatic effects that fireworks can have on pets and farm animals.

## **Sparklers**

Sparklers are often seen as being harmless but they do burn at fierce temperatures. To a young child, the heat from a sparkler is equivalent to the heat from a welding torch.

You should:

- store sparklers in a closed box in a cool, dry place
- always light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves, keeping them at arm's length
- never hold a sparkler in their hand while also holding a baby or child
- plunge finished sparklers hot end down into a bucket of water as soon as they have burnt out (sparklers stay hot for a long time)
- not take sparklers to public displays – it will be too crowded to use them safely
- never give sparklers to under fives – they will not understand how to use them safely
- always supervise children using sparklers, teach them how to use them properly, and give children woollen gloves to wear

## Fancy dress costumes

Parents should be aware of the potential dangers of their children wearing fancy dress costumes, either shop bought or home-made, if they're around fireworks, sparklers, or open flames (such as pumpkins with candles).

If a child is wearing a fancy dress costume this Halloween:

- keep them away from naked flames – avoid using a naked flame or candle in pumpkins; use a torch, glow stick or battery-operated candle
- stop, drop and roll if clothing does catch on fire – to try to put the flames out and also to stop the flames from rising towards the face
- choose a costume and mask that doesn't restrict a child's visibility or vision
- make sure they wear woollen tights or 'heavy' trousers (jeans) and a woollen jumper under the costume
- supervise them well at all times

Look out for costumes that are labelled 'Low Flammability' 'BS5722' or have the European code 'BS EN 14878'.

## Fireworks and the law

Fireworks must be bought from a licensed dealer, who is required to keep sales records.

Fireworks bought from other sources could be of a sub-standard quality, presenting an even bigger risk of injury. It is also essential that you have a licence when buying any fireworks.

You can find a list of licensed dealers on the [fireworks page](#).

For any enquiries on the use of fireworks or if you need help with applying for a licence, [phone the fireworks helpline](#).

## More useful links

---

# [Vaccine available to protect against shingles](#)

All people aged 70 and 78 years old are encouraged to get the shingles vaccine. It will help protect them against the common and painful disease and its complications.

## Shingles

[Shingles](#) is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. After you recover from chickenpox, some of the virus remains inactive in the body and nervous system. It can then reactivate later in life when your immune system is weakened.

About a quarter of adults will get shingles at some point in their life.

For many people, shingles can be a mild infection with good recovery. But it can also be very painful and is more likely to affect people as they get older.

The older people are, the worse it can be, with some people left with pain lasting for years after the initial rash has healed.

## Vaccine

The vaccine will be offered routinely to:

- people aged 70 years on 1 September 2018 (those born between 2 September 1947 and 1 September 1948, inclusive)
- people aged 78 on 1 September 2018 (those born between 2 September 1939 and 1 September 1940, inclusive)

Anyone eligible for the vaccine in previous years, but didn't get it, can get vaccinated this year if they are under 80 years of age.

The shingles vaccine is given as a single injection in the upper arm and, unlike the flu vaccine, you only need to have it once.

Side effects are usually quite mild and don't last very long. The most common side effects include:

- headache; and/ or

- pain and swelling where injected

You can find out more about the vaccination at the page below:

If you are invited for the vaccine by your GP, you are encouraged to get vaccinated to help avoid getting shingles and its painful after-effects.

## **Lowered immunity**

People who have lowered immunity must not get the shingles vaccine, including anyone who has leukaemia, lymphoma or is having chemotherapy.

Other medicines can also lower immunity, for example, high doses of oral steroids.

Check with your GP if you are on any treatment, especially if it is prescribed to you at a hospital.

## **More useful links**

---

## **[Be breast aware and get checked early](#)**

All women are urged to be 'breast aware' and get screened when invited. It's vital to recognise the signs and symptoms of breast cancer, and to get checked early.

## **Breast screening**

Prevention and early detection are key to saving lives from breast cancer.

All women who are invited for breast screening are encouraged to think about going.

Most women will have normal mammograms. Out of every 100 women who attend for screening, around four are asked to come back for further tests. Most of them will have a normal result.

There is information about screening on the page below.

Screening remains the best way of detecting breast cancer at an early stage when treatment can be more effective.

## **Signs and symptoms**

It is important for women to look out for changes in the appearance of their breasts, such as:

- a change in size or outline of either breast, especially those caused by arm movement
- any puckering, dimpling or redness of the skin
- veins that stand out more than usual

Women should be aware of any feelings of pain or discomfort in one part of either the breast or armpit, particularly if it is new and persistent.

Women should also look and feel for any lumps or thickening in either breast that feels different from the other breast, as well as any swelling or lumps under the armpit or around the collarbone.

Also look out for any changes to the nipple, such as a nipple that:

- has become pulled in
- has changed shape
- has a discharge
- bleeds
- has a rash or has crusted, flaky skin

If the change is due to cancer, earlier detection may mean simpler and more successful treatment.

Many changes are harmless but all should be checked by a GP.

You can find out more on the [breast cancer page](#).

While breast cancer is much more common in women, it can also affect men. In rare cases it develops in the small amount of breast tissue men have behind their nipples.

## **More useful links**

Share this page