



Mark Piggott

HEARD an excellent piece of advice this morning. If it's a sunny day, apparently the temperature rises and it becomes warmer. When this happens, it's a good idea to open a window. And that's not all: drinking plenty of water, applying gallons of sun-cream and wearing lighter clothing all significantly lower the risk of spontaneous human combustion.

The Met Office, rather than simply announcing it's turned out nice again, issue "heat health" alerts in case people cast off their thermals and venture outdoors. Ominous warnings about UV rays, humidity and the pollen count are now as much a part of the weather forecast as lectures about climate change (from what I can gather, symptoms of global warming include hotter and/or wetter summers, warmer and/or colder winters, and no overall change in climate).

You'd think the human race had never experienced sun, snow, wind or rain and are presently cowering in our homes wondering what that big bright orb in the sky is.

The Department of Health urges young people, the old and those with ginger hair (probably) to remain indoors and keep motionless while awaiting further instructions. I must be a rotten dad, as my kids rather enjoy bouncing on the trampoline and splashing in the paddling pool. Why, the other day I foolishly allowed them to visit the school fair, where they and countless other children of negligent parents jumped around on bouncy castles and had a pretty good time.

Apparently, by allowing them outside without sunglasses I might as well be grafting cataracts to their eyeballs. Presumably on reading this social services will break off from yet another conference where they apologise for all the child murders they've

THE "STOP WORRYING" message with ginger hair (probably) to remain indoors and keep motionless while awaiting further instructions. I must be a rotten dad, as my kids rather enjoy bouncing on the trampoline and splashing in the paddling pool. Why, the other day I foolishly allowed them to visit the school fair, where they and countless other children of negligent parents jumped around on bouncy castles and had a pretty good time.

A PARENTLY, by allowing them outside without sunglasses I might as well be grafting cataracts to their eyeballs. Presumably on reading this social services will break off from yet another conference where they apologise for all the child murders they've committed to come along and break down my door wielding parasols and refreshing drinks.

As for older people, they might think they know a bit about how to live a long time – the one thing, surely, we could give older people credit for – but apparently they have absolutely no idea what to do when the sun shines, and need protecting from themselves. I suppose if, like my grandparents, you'd lived through a world war you might think you know a bit about danger from the skies, but those German bombers had nothing on a sunny day. Hell, maybe Hitler should have invested less in V2 rockets and more on sun-lamps; that would have brought Britain to its knees in no time; though I don't recall Churchill's speech being "we will fight you on the beaches, but only after applying Boots' Own Brand to exposed areas of the skin."

I'd love some of these so-called experts to explain to Mr Churchill why drinking alcohol in the sun is akin to imbibing a heady mixture of arsenic, cyanide and rat poison. Like Winston I'm not averse to a drink or two, but apparently sitting in a beer garden with a pint of something refreshing is not only irresponsible, it's suicidal.

These warnings are so contradictory. We are told that young children should have sun-cream applied before venturing out, yet we are also warned children need sun or risk vitamin D deficiency, leading to multiple sclerosis, rickets and possibly even freckles. We are warned Britain faces an obesity tsunami and children need to get out more, yet when they do go out and run around a bit we're told they run the very real risk of over-heating like a frog in a microwave.

Just lighten up everyone. Loosen a few buttons, sit in the garden with a book and a beer, and try not to think too hard about the multiple risks to which you're negligently exposing yourself. I wouldn't be surprised if in the near future people with melanoma will be grilled about their sun-bathing habits before being considered for treatment; anyone found to have ventured out without a hat when it's over twenty in the shade will be found guilty of self-abuse and left to shrivel like a tortoise in a bonfire.

Another thing. Sun-cream is hugely expensive. But if it's really so irresponsible to go out without it, surely the government should stamp down on profiteering and hand the stuff out for free?

Ends

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Just stop worrying and enjoy



HIGH RISK? Small child helps warm weather

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