

Children's Place In The Sun

Giving Baby His First Sun-Bath: The Seaside Is The Best Place For Children's Holidays

FRESH air used to be considered a *cause* of pneumonia. Actually, it is a preventive, for any hospital out-patient department can show that children with pneumonia are habitually over-clothed. Sunlight and air circulating over the skin are probably the greatest of recuperative agents. But—and this is important—there must be *no overdoses*, or results are painful and do more harm than good, writes Sister Cooper, S.R.N., in the "Daily Mail."

Remember that it is heat, not light, which may prove dangerous; and that is why it so important to choose before 11 a.m. or after 4 p.m. for children's sun-bathing

hours. A gentle breeze is a further advantage.

Don't expose a baby's limbs to sunlight before he is two months old. After that age, you can first expose the legs for one minute daily for three days, then increasing by one minute daily to five minutes. Next you can expose the arms in addition for one minute, increasing the time as before. You can often do this in a room. Between 9 and 11 a.m. is the best time for baby's sun-bath.

After the child is over one year, expose gradually in the same way, but giving a five minutes' sun-bath at first, increasing to 10 minutes. After a few days he could run naked for five or 10 minutes, increasing to half an hour or longer. Any undue reddening of the skin or irritability of temper means an overdose of sunlight.

A shady hat is necessary to protect the toddler's eyes from direct sun or glare. Baby's pram needs a sun canopy; I prefer the umbrella shape, which allows the maximum of moving air to circulate. I still see far too many leather pram-hoods up and mackintosh covers on. And it is surely significant that the faces peeping out from these hoods are always peaked and frail-looking! There certainly is an art in sun-bathing as there is in sea-bathing.

The bath is a splendid preparation for a child's first sea-bathe. To enjoy both bath and bathe, the children need complete confidence and fearlessness. No baby should be coaxed or forced into either bath or sea against his will.

A slip in the bath, or water that is too

hot, may cause temporary terror of the water. In that case, no amount of explanation from mother or nurse will be of any avail. The only remedy lies in forgetfulness. If this fear has arisen, try bathing the child in a different room for a week or two.

The cool sponge is an excellent preparation for the sea-bathe. This can be started at any age over six months. Have a basin of water a little cooler than the bath water, wring a sponge out of this and quickly pass it over baby's body. Follow with a brisk rub with a towel. The reaction should be a pink, glowing skin.

Most babies enjoy this heartily, and greet the gradually cooling shower with chuckles and laughter. The toddler trained in this way usually enjoys a cool dip in the morning all the year round.

Take advantage of the remaining warm weather to make a start with the cool splash. The general health will benefit from it, and winter colds may be prevented by this daily routine.

Sea water is strengthening, and sea-salt can be added to the bath water with benefit—particularly during the early days of walking. Hard water can be softened by being boiled and allowed to cool, or by one of the many excellent water softeners now obtainable. Another softener is oatmeal, which is particularly suitable for a sensitive skin. Boiled rain-water is delightful, of course, but difficult to obtain nowadays. It is particularly suitable in a case of sunburn. If the skin is very red and tender, however, all washing and bathing should be omitted until the soreness subsides. Calamine and witch hazel are soothing and cleansing if dabbed on.

The warm bath is undoubtedly best given in the evening, for it has a soothing effect on the baby and removes the marks of a little man's "busy day" out of doors.

I am often asked at what age the big bath should be started. Actually, any time after six months, or earlier if the first bath is too small, is the answer. A cramped bath deprives the child of much exercise and

