

**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 25, 2020

**Alberta Blue Cross shares essential summer safety tips**  
*Plan ahead to be prepared for any situation this summer.*

COVID-19 has impacted summer vacation plans for many Albertans, but the pandemic has not stopped the arrival of summer. While large social gatherings and events like festivals and outdoor concerts aren't permitted this summer, the opportunity to spend time outdoors and travel within Alberta, responsibly, are still possible.

As a partner in Alberta's [preventable injury campaign](#) and an organization committed to health promotion, Alberta Blue Cross® encourages Albertans to have a safe and active summer.

**1. Practice sun safety.**

Avoid sunburns by using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least SPF 30. Generously apply it 20 minutes before going outside and reapply frequently. Don't forget about your face and eyes—protect them by wearing a hat and sunglasses with an ultraviolet (UV) A/B certified seal. With kids being more sensitive to sunlight, it's even more important they're protected when outside for even short periods.

**2. Stay cool and hydrated.**

Sunshine and high temperatures increase your risk of sunstroke and heat exhaustion—both can be life-threatening for infants, young children and seniors. To avoid this, stay hydrated by drinking lots of water and other non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated drinks. Increase your vitamin C intake—it provides a natural defense against heat stroke, exhaustion and heat rash. Make sure to stay cool by wearing light-coloured clothing and seeking shade often. Never leave children or pets inside a parked vehicle.

**3. Be safe in and on the water.**

No one plans to drown, but dozens of individuals die in water-related accidents each year in Alberta. According to the [2019 Alberta Drowning Report](#), 220 people drowned in Alberta from 2012 to 2016, with males aged 20 to 34 years as the most common victims of drowning-related deaths. Most drownings occur in lakes, ponds and rivers—even as a good swimmer, you're at risk of drowning if you fall out of a boat or are in an accident. When visiting bodies of water, make sure you and your family are equipped with life jackets that are properly fitted to each individual and approved by Transport Canada. Children can drown in as little as one inch of water, so never leave them unsupervised in or near water.

**4. Avoid pesky bug bites.**

While the risk of getting a serious disease from a bug bite in Alberta is low, it's important to be aware of the risks and how you can prevent them. Cover up with light-coloured clothing, which is less attractive to mosquitoes and allows you to see ticks easily. Wear insect repellent but apply sunscreen first. After being outside, check yourself, your children and pets for any ticks or bug bites. If you find a bug bite, follow proper instructions on how to treat it quickly to reduce the chance of infection or disease. You can find treatment instructions on [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#) or by calling Health Link at 811.

[ab.bluecross.ca](http://ab.bluecross.ca)

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## 5. Play safe.

Make sure that backyard and playground equipment is properly secured to the ground and teach children how to play safely. Be especially careful around recreational trampolines, which are an increasing cause of injuries among children—and ensure all trampolines contain a safety net enclosure and that any use is closely supervised. Always supervise children playing outdoors if they're under the age of 12—be attentive and close enough to act if needed.

## 6. Wear a helmet.

To protect yourself from injury, it's important to wear a helmet when on a bicycle, skateboard, scooter, rollerblades or when operating a motorized off-road vehicle. Alberta laws require helmets be worn by anyone operating a motorcycle or an off-highway vehicle—for example, an all-terrain vehicle (ATV). Albertans under the age of 18 are also required to wear a helmet when cycling. Make sure your helmet fits properly—it should be snug, level front-to-back, sit an inch above your eyebrows and allow for two fingers to fit between your chin and the strap.

## 7. Camp safely.

Plan to be prepared for any situation when camping. Bring a map of the area and make sure someone is aware of where you're headed—especially if there's no cellphone service. Bring clothing for all types of weather and always pack an emergency kit with a flashlight, a radio, extra batteries and medical supplies. Avoid attracting bears to your campsite by keeping food, garbage and recyclables inside a vehicle, hard-sided trailer or bear-proof container. In the event of severe weather, seek shelter in a building or metal-roofed vehicle—never stay in your tent. Prior to your trip, be sure to check the [Alberta Parks website](#) for the most up-to-date information on camping regulations.

## 8. Keep food fresh.

Prepare and handle foods safely to reduce the risk of food-borne illness—especially when barbequing or going outdoors. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling food. Use hand sanitizer if you're camping or on a picnic. Keep food between 4 and 6°C to prevent growth of harmful bacteria. Discard any cooked food that has been at room temperature for more than two hours. When in doubt, throw it out!

## 9. Protect your home.

Follow some of these simple tips to decrease the possibility of someone breaking into your home while you're away on vacation—even short ones. If you're going to mention your trip on social media, make sure your profile and status updates are set to private. While away, avoid geotagging pictures or adding the location to public status and story updates. Have friends or neighbours check in on your home to bring in mail and packages or identify any leaks or hazards that could become bigger problems. As a bonus, their visits will make potential criminals think your house is occupied.

## 10. Keep an eye on the sky.

As you know, summer weather conditions in Alberta can change fast. Severe weather like heavy winds, hailstorms or tornadoes can be life-threatening. Before you head out, be sure to check the weather forecast. While outside, keep an eye on the sky, keep a radio or your mobile phone nearby to be aware of any weather advisories, and have a plan to find shelter should a storm arise.

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*For more information, please contact Katelyn Pretzlaff, Communications Officer, Corporate Communications, Alberta Blue Cross, at 780-498-8846 or [kpretzla@ab.bluecross.ca](mailto:kpretzla@ab.bluecross.ca).*



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