

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Alberta Blue Cross[®] shares essential summer safety tips
Beat the heat and plan to be prepared for any situation this summer.

With multiple locations across Alberta hitting record-breaking temperatures this week, Alberta Blue Cross is sharing tips for Albertans to beat the heat and safely enjoy their summer.

As a partner in Alberta's [preventable injury campaign](#) and a champion for wellness, Alberta Blue Cross encourages Albertans to have a safe and active summer.

1. 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. Additional tips to beat the heat, especially during heat waves and for those who don't have air conditioning, include the following:

- Open doors and windows and use fans to promote air circulation throughout your home.
- Keep blinds closed.
- Seek refuge in a cooler basement if you have one.
- Avoid large meals, use an outdoor grill and eat fresh foods that don't require you to use the oven or stove to prepare.
- Eliminate extra sources—don't leave computers or appliances running and avoid using incandescent light bulbs.
- Take cold showers or baths, soak your hands and feet in buckets or bowls of cold water, place ice packs or wet towels on your pulse points (inside of wrists, back of the neck and behind the knees) and use a spray bottle filled with cold water to spritz yourself.
- Visit public buildings with air conditioning, like libraries, art galleries, movie theatres, museums and shopping malls.
- Place your pillowcases or blankets in a bag and pop them in the freezer for a few minutes before going to sleep.

Remember that pets also suffer when the temperature rises—ensure they have plenty of cool water to drink. Help keep animal's body temperature down with cool baths or showers, wet towels or washcloths laid on their skin or the floor and outdoor hoses, sprinklers and pools.

2. 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.

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 [2020 Alberta Drowning Infographic](#), an average of 41 people drown per year in Alberta, with males and those aged 50 to 64 as the most common victims of drowning-related deaths. Most drownings occur from May to September 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.

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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 barbecuing 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 or even just for the day. 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. Before leaving your home, even just for the day, check that all doors locked, and windows are shut or not accessible from the outside.

10. Keep an eye on the sky.

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.

-30-

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