

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.*

For two summers, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted vacation plans for many Albertans. Now, opportunities to travel, participate in large social gatherings and attend festivals and outdoor concerts have finally returned and Alberta Blue Cross is sharing tips to help Albertans 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 heat 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). Or 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.

2. Practice sun safety.

Avoid sunburns by using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 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 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. According to the [2021 20-Year Drowning Analysis of Alberta](#), an average of 30 Albertans drown per year—the most likely to drown are males and those aged 20 to 29. 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 at [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#) or by calling Health Link at 811.

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5. Play safe.

Make sure 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, such as 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. Keep your pets safe.

Always provide pets with access to clean, fresh water and shade for protection from the heat and sun. Exercise pets in the early morning or late evening to avoid the midday heat. On hot days, keep them off pavement to protect their feet. During heat waves, you can help keep your pet's body temperature down with cool baths or showers, cooling vests and wraps or outdoor hoses, sprinklers and pools. Never leave pets inside a parked vehicle, even for a short time. The temperature inside a vehicle can quickly rise to dangerous levels and cause a pet to suffer heatstroke, irreparable organ damage and even death. Keep your pets up to date on their medications to avoid health complications and diseases that can be transmitted through fleas, ticks, mosquitos and other bugs.

8. Camp safely.

Plan to be prepared for any situation when camping. Bring a map of the area and make sure someone knows 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, check the [Alberta Parks website](#) for the most up-to-date information on camping regulations.

9. 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!

10. Respect nature.

Always give any wildlife you encounter plenty of space, and never feed them directly or indirectly by leaving unattended food or garbage for them to find. Once an animal has tasted human food, it may seek it out and endanger itself or other humans. Always dispose of waste properly—litter is not only unappealing, but it also poses a danger to the wildlife and can destroy habitats over time. Follow all park rules and respect signs posted in wild areas, including trail closures. When driving in parks and forests, obey speed limits and keep an eye out for animals. If you see wildlife along the road, slow down, stay in your vehicle and move on. Only stop if wildlife is crossing your path. Stopping on roads to observe wildlife puts yourself, wildlife and other motorists at risk.

11. 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.



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12. Protect your home.

To decrease the possibility of someone breaking into your home while you're away on vacation or even just for the day, follow some simple tips. 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.

13. Don't forget travel insurance.

Anything can happen when travelling and it usually happens when you least expect it. Whether travelling internationally or within Canada, it's recommended you purchase travel insurance to cover the cost of any unexpected medical expenses. While hospital care and physician services are typically covered in other provinces, services like ground and air ambulance and hospital transfers aren't. Purchase insurance before you leave and make sure you're covered for the full length of your trip—this includes the day you leave and the day you get back. [Learn more about our travel insurance.](#)

An image for media use is available on our website at ab.bluecross.ca/images/2022/email/st-albert-childrens-festival.jpg. This photo was taken on June 4, 2022, at the St. Albert Children's Festival, an event sponsored by Alberta Blue Cross.

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For more information, please contact Katelyn Pretzlaff, communications officer, Corporate Communications, Alberta Blue Cross, at kpretzla@ab.bluecross.ca.



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