

National Drowning Prevention Week provides timely reminder to practice water safety

As summer heats up, many Albertans are visiting local pools, heading out boating, taking a dip in a lake or enjoying a relaxing river float. However people decide to cool off in or on the water, it's important to stay safe while beating the heat. That's why Alberta Blue Cross® is promoting the Lifesaving Society's National Drowning Prevention Week, which is from July 17 to 23 this year.

Sadly, dozens of people die in water-related accidents each year. Summer 2022 is unfortunately no exception, as multiple drownings have occurred already across Alberta this month.

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 good swimmers are at risk of drowning if they fall out of a boat or are in an accident.

There are several simple steps Albertans can take to ensure that they and those around them are safe while on the water.

1. Properly prepare for your excursion.

- Check both water and weather conditions before heading out on a lake or river. Weather can change and quickly become dangerous.
- Make sure everyone on the water is equipped with—and wearing—life jackets that are properly fitted to each individual and approved by Transport Canada.
- Ensure boats have a safety kit and cellphone on board in case of emergencies.
- It's a good idea to have someone in your group with CPR and first aid training.

2. Teach basic swimming and water safety skills to children.

- Children can drown in as little as one inch of water, so never leave them unsupervised in or near water.
- Children should always wear life jackets in deep water or if they're swimming beyond arms reach from the adult supervising them.
- Advocate for all children to have access to swimming lessons. Children can begin learning to swim at ages as young as one year old, depending on their individual strength and comfort in water. It's a good idea to find a swimming lesson that you can participate in along with your child at first.

3. Enjoy yourself—safely.

- Never operate a boat while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Avoid climbing rocks or cliffs near water for photo-op purposes. A selfie should never compromise your safety.
- If you're out on the water alone, make sure you let someone know where you're going and when you plan to be back.

For more information, please contact Scott Meeberg, communications officer, Corporate Communications, Alberta Blue Cross®, at smeeberg@ab.bluecross.ca.



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