

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alberta Blue Cross® shares essential summer safety tips

Beat the heat and be prepared for any situation that comes your way.

Summer is in full swing, and Albertans are embracing all kinds of activities. From camping and swimming to backyard barbecues and outdoor festivals and concerts, safety is a key ingredient for enjoying the season responsibly.

As a partner in Alberta's [preventable injury campaign](#) and a trusted advocate for health and wellness, Alberta Blue Cross encourages Albertans to prepare for any situation that comes their way this summer with 16 essential safety tips to ensure your summer adventures are worry-free.

Follow these suggestions to make the most of your summer while keeping safety at the forefront of your plans.

1. Stay cool and hydrated.

High temperatures increase your risk of sunstroke and heat exhaustion. Stay hydrated by drinking lots of water and other non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages. Increase your vitamin C intake—it provides a natural defence against heat stroke, exhaustion and heat rash. 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, but keep blinds closed.
- Avoid large meals, use an outdoor grill and eat fresh foods that don't require using 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 cold water spritz yourself with cold water and place ice packs or wet towels on your pulse points (inside of wrists, back of the neck and behind the knees).
- Place your pillowcases or blankets in a bag and pop them in the freezer for a few minutes before going to sleep.
- Seek refuge in a cool basement if you can.
- Visit public buildings with air conditioning, like libraries, art galleries, movie theatres, museums and shopping malls.

2. Practice sun safety.

Avoid sunburns by using broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30. Apply it generously 20 minutes before going outside and reapply frequently—don't forget about your face and ears. Protect the top of your head by wearing a hat. Wear sunglasses with an UltraViolet (UV) A/B certified seal to protect your eyes. Kids are more sensitive to sunlight, so they must be protected when outside, even for short periods.

3. Do your part to prevent forest fires.

Alberta is in the midst of an unprecedented fire season. The province has seen [more than 800 wildfires this year](#), burning more than 1.5 million hectares of land. Most wildfires in Alberta are caused by humans and preventable. Everyone must do their part to reduce the risk of wildfires. When camping, use the stove, ring or pit provided for a fire. Before leaving a fire, ensure it's completely extinguished: soak it, stir it and soak it again. If you smoke, soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them in the garbage—never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes on the ground or in a trash can. Always stay up to date on the [fire ban status](#) in your area. Call 310-FIRE (3473) to report a wildfire from anywhere in Alberta.

4. 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. 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.

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5. Play safe.

Teach children how to play safely. Make sure backyard and playground equipment is properly secured to the ground. Be especially careful around recreational trampolines, which are an increasing cause of injuries among children. 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.

Protect yourself from injury by wearing a helmet on a bicycle, skateboard, scooter, rollerblades or when operating a motorized off-road vehicle. Alberta laws require helmets to 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 two fingers to fit between your chin and the strap.

7. Protect your pets.

Always provide pets 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 the pavement or other hot trails to protect their feet from burns and blisters. During heat waves, you can help keep your pet's body temperature down with cool baths or showers, cooling vests and wraps or by wetting their paws outside. Never leave pets inside a parked vehicle, even for a short time. Keep your pets up to date on their medications to avoid health complications and diseases transmitted through fleas, ticks, mosquitos and other bugs.

8. Respect nature.

If you encounter wildlife, always give them plenty of space. Never feed them directly or indirectly by leaving unattended food or garbage for them to find. Always dispose of waste properly—litter is unappealing, poses a danger to 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.

9. 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.

10. 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 to 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 your pets for any ticks or bug bites. If you find a bug bite, follow proper instructions to treat it quickly to reduce the chance of infection or disease. You can find treatment instructions at [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca) or by calling Health Link at 811.

11. 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 the growth of harmful bacteria. Discard any cooked food that has been at room temperature for more than 2 hours—when in doubt, throw it out!

12. Drive safe.

According to Alberta Motor Association (AMA), [70 per cent of fatal driving accidents occur on dry roads](#), with the most accidents occurring between June and September. Before you get behind the wheel, ensure you are well-rested, and your vehicle is prepped. On long road trips, schedule a break about every 2 hours. Drive to the conditions and obey all speed limits. Stay in the



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right lane on highways unless passing and allow more room when passing an RV, trailer or large truck. Invest in a [car safety kit](#) with a first aid kit, flashlight and jumper cables. Know the conditions you're facing by checking [AMA road reports](#) before hitting the road.

13. 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 going, 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. Before your trip, check the [Alberta Parks website](#) for the most up-to-date information on camping regulations.

14. Protect your home.

Decrease the possibility of someone breaking into your home while you're away by following some simple tips. Before leaving, even just for the day, check that all doors are locked and windows are shut or not accessible from the outside. While you're away, have friends or neighbours check in on your home regularly. Their visits will make potential criminals think your house is occupied. As a bonus, they can bring in your mail and packages and keep an eye out for any leaks or hazards that could become bigger problems.

15. Don't compromise on cyber security.

Know the dos and don'ts of travelling in the digital age. If you're going to mention your trip on social media, make sure your profile and status updates are set to private. To protect your whereabouts, avoid geotagging photos or adding the location to public status and story updates. Only post photos of specific locations or sites at least a day or more after you've left. When connecting to public WiFi, make sure the network you're connecting to is legitimate, as criminals are known to replicate public networks to lure unsuspecting travellers into sharing information. Ensure your device has a tracking app on—if it is stolen, you may be able to see where it is. [Check out more cyber security travel tips here.](#)

16. Don't forget travel insurance.

Anything can happen when travelling, often 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 travel insurance before you leave and make sure you're covered for the entire length of your trip—this includes the day you leave and the day you get back. Alberta Blue Cross offers single-trip, multi-trip and annual travel insurance plans to protect Albertans from costly expenses during their travels.

An image for media use is available on our website at ab.bluecross.ca/images/2023/newsroom/childrens-festival-of-the-arts.jpg. This photo was taken on June 4, 2023, at the Northern Alberta International Children's Festival of the Arts, an event sponsored by Alberta Blue Cross.

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For more information, please contact Samantha Busby, communications officer, Corporate Communications, Alberta Blue Cross, at sbusby@ab.bluecross.ca.



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