



SUMMER SAFETY

Please click on any of the links below to go directly to your specified topic within this document.

[Water Safety](#)

[Did You Know?](#)

[Teaching your Child to Swim](#)

[The Golden Rules to First Aid](#)

[Hiking Safety](#)

[First Time Hikers](#)

[Bicycle Safety](#)

[Sports Safety](#)



aah...summer is here and for a few precious months we have freedom from boots, scarves, mitts and hats, shovelling snow and de-icing car locks. I want to feel the sun on my shoulders and the warm sand beneath my feet but mostly I want to see the smiles on my children's faces as they frolic about happily enjoying their outdoor activities.

As a parent the more prepared you are, the more you can enjoy your summer. Here are some great safety tips for your family.

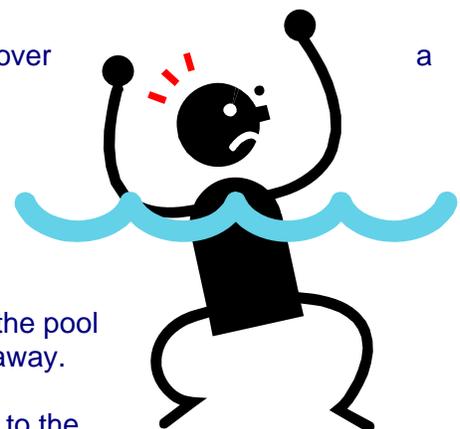
Water Safety

- ▶ Before you go near water it's a good idea for your children to try on their lifejackets from the previous year to make sure they fit properly and that the zipper and buckles are in good working order.
- ▶ Check the weather forecast before you venture out on or near the water.
- ▶ Parents should have knowledge of basic lifesaving skills – [First Aid and CPR](#) in case of an emergency.
- ▶ Supervise your children at all times.
- ▶ Keep children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings to avoid entrapment.
- ▶ Be aware of your children's swimming limitations.
- ▶ Be aware that floatation devices and other pool toys can carry your child into deep water.

- ▶ Be aware that pool toys and floatation devices can malfunction and deflate.
- ▶ Ensure lifeguards are on duty and that children are wearing proper floatation devices or lifejackets.
- ▶ No matter how nice the weather is and no matter how close you are to shore, make sure your children are wearing their lifejackets when they are on a boat. It's important for parents to set a good example by wearing lifejackets as well.
- ▶ Teach your children to obey all water Safety and Security Regulations.
- ▶ Establish swimming rules, such as:
 - always swim with a friend or an adult,
 - only dive in the deep end, and
 - never use glass containers around the pool area.



- ▶ Swimmers should always be aware of their surroundings. Teach your children to never dive into an area where they cannot see the bottom or are unsure of the depth of the water.
- ▶ Incorporate an emergency 'Action Plan' with your children by establishing a signal, emergency equipment and procedures.
- ▶ Keep Emergency Rescue Equipment, a First Aid Kit and cell telephone close at hand.
- ▶ Empty the wading pool when it's not in use and store it upside down.
- ▶ Many municipalities require fencing surrounding a pool. Be sure that you meet the municipal requirements. Ideally, fencing should be at least 6 feet high and completely surround the pool. To meet Toronto by-laws, the fence does not include the house as part of the 4-sided fence enclosure and therefore the house cannot act as a fence. Gates should be self-latching and self-closing ensuring that the gate is not inadvertently left open. Consider self-locking mechanisms.
- ▶ Remove any items that could be used by a child to climb over fence and gain entry to the pool area.
- ▶ Be sure there are no spaces under the fence or between uprights that are more than 4" wide.
- ▶ Make sure your pool cover is a 'safety' cover. Don't use clip-on covers for aboveground pools.
- ▶ Remove any steps or ladders leaning from the ground to the pool when the pool is not in use and keep these items locked away.
- ▶ Use door locks and alarms to prevent children from going to the



pool area when adults are not around.

- ▶ Don't allow children to wear dangly necklaces or wear their hair long and loose in or around the pool to prevent being entangled in drains.

Did You Know...?

- ▶ 90% of boaters who drown are not wearing lifejackets or are not wearing their lifejackets properly.
- ▶ 40% of boating fatalities occur when a life jacket is present, but not worn.
- ▶ Most people who drown never intended on being in the water.
- ▶ 82% of Canadians believe that there is a legal requirement to wear a lifejacket but only half actually wear them. Canadian law states that all boaters must have lifejackets on the boat, but the Red Cross advocates that all boaters should wear lifejackets at all times. Should there be an accident, ***you won't have time to put on a lifejacket.***
- ▶ 46% of children know how to swim. Children do not understand the dangers of water. Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for Canadian children from 1 to 4 years of age.
- ▶ 51% of Canadians only strategy to prevent injury is by not allowing their children under the age of 10 near swimming pool areas.
- ▶ Most children drownings occur when they gain access to a pool without a self-closing and self-latching gate.
- ▶ A small child can disappear in seconds and can drown in only a few inches of water – enough to cover their mouth and nose.



Teaching Your Child to Swim

- ▶ Teach your child to be comfortable with putting her face in the water – in the bathtub, a basin or in the pool.
- ▶ Show your child how to blow bubbles and how to hold her breath.
- ▶ A child will display confidence once she is able to produce many bubbles.
- ▶ Take your child into warm, pool water so that she will have an enjoyable experience.



- ▶ Reassure your child that she is safe in your arms.
- ▶ Limit the length of time during the first few water experiences.
- ▶ When your child is comfortable in the water and begins to hold her breath, stand in the water near the pool's edge. Have your child stand at the side of the swimming pool and catch her as she jumps toward you in the water.
- ▶ As she becomes more comfortable with jumping in the water, gradually move further out into the water.
- ▶ Learning to float is difficult for children but with time, patience and teaching them how to relax in the water they will gradually start to float.
- ▶ Teach your child to scissor kick her feet in the water.
- ▶ When she is comfortable doing scissor kicks teach her to make as many bubbles as possible at the same time.
- ▶ Once your child has mastered these basic water skills you can teach her to use arm strokes and then later more advanced swimming techniques.
- ▶ To ensure your child continues to learn strong swimming skills and techniques it would be wise to hire a swimming instructor for a few swimming lessons.
- ▶ Review basic First Aid and CPR.
- ▶ Continue to teach your child water safety rules.



The Canadian Red Cross has been offering swimming instruction and leadership development programs in Canada for more than 60 years. Today, over one million Canadians enrol in their programs each year and 20,000 people are trained and certified annually as Water Safety Instructors.

Red Cross Swimming Lessons

Whether you're a parent wishing to enrol your child in swimming lessons, a teen who is interested in becoming a water safety instructor, or an adult looking to improve your swimming skills, Red Cross has a program for you! [Click here](#) for information on all of their swimming and water safety programs for children, teens, and adults.

The Golden Rules to First Aid

- ▶ Stay calm and you will stay in control.
- ▶ Establish whether the area that surrounds you is safe. Do not place yourself or the injured person at risk.
- ▶ Establish if you or the injured person needs medical attention. If you are not sure, ask for advice.
- ▶ Calm the injured person by staying near their side. Keep them warm if they are severely injured and/or in shock.
- ▶ Do not move the injured person if you suspect an injury to the back or neck.
- ▶ Provide medical experts with as much information about the accident and symptoms as possible including allergies, blood type, vaccinations and medical conditions.
- ▶ Wash your hands or wear disposable gloves before applying bandages or dressings.
- ▶ Clean wounds carefully wiping away any dirt by using a clean cotton cloth that is sprayed with disinfectant or rinsing with cold water. Pat the area dry before applying a clean dressing. If an object is imbedded in the injured party, do not remove it. Wait for the Emergency Medical Service to remove it.
- ▶ Keep your First Aid Kit up-to-date and replenished with supplies.



Hiking Safety

There's nothing quite like the earthy, sweet smell of the forested ground and cedar trees, listening to birds singing away as they flit and flutter from tree to tree, and the colourful flowers as they peak through the blanketed greenery - and then ZAP! I can feel a mosquito biting my ankle, and while I flail about trying to avoid a second bite, I fall on poison ivy, which just happens to be right beside a hidden ledge of loose rocks. Such is the plight of an avid but unprepared hiker! From

serenity to mania within a moment's notice.

With the right safety guidelines and preparations, hikers can avoid bites, rashes and injury in the wilderness while enjoying the wonderment of nature.

- ▶ Before you start on your hike, it's a good idea to plan your journey by doing a little research on the web or at your local library. Once you have found your destination of choice look for trail hikes, activities, 'must see' areas, printable maps and contact information of Park Rangers that can inform you of safety and environmental issues, i.e. plants, insects and animals that should be avoided.
- ▶ Check the weather forecast before you venture out.
- ▶ The first hike of the season should be a short excursion. Until a hiker is confident after completing their First Aid training, they should not venture very far from professional medical facilities. Pack a replenished First Aid Kit and cell telephone as safety precautions.
- ▶ Encourage children not to exhaust themselves early in a hike. If children do not pace themselves, they will run out of energy and have to be carried. Remember the adage – "It is not the destination that teaches, but the journey itself!"
- ▶ Teach your children to never venture into the woods by themselves. Hiking is a group sport and a great adventure for the whole family. The chances of becoming lost, sustaining an injury, or losing supplies is much higher when you are alone. It is always wise to tell the Park Ranger where you are going and when you plan on returning.
- ▶ Always be aware how far away you are from professional medical care. Park Rangers will be able to direct you to the nearest hospital or clinic prior to an accident. Knowing this information in advance could save someone's life.
- ▶ Teach your children to dress properly. Encourage them to dress in layers so that they will be able to put on or take off clothing, depending on weather conditions.
- ▶ Keep an eye on the trail well in front of where you are walking and always consider the path before bounding forward.
- ▶ Put the slowest hiker in front and pace the group according to that person so that the group stays together.
- ▶ Employ a 'stay within sight' safety policy for your children. If a child gets scared, they will run all over the place searching for you. This uncontrolled action can have tragic results. Nobody should ever walk beyond each other's range of sight.
- ▶ A hiking trail is the safest place to remain because it has a beginning and an end. Teach your children to stay on the beaten path and away from ledges of any kind.
- ▶ The Boy Scouts recommend you bring one pint of water per person for each half hour you will be hiking. A canteen strap allows for ease of transport. The water in the brook or stream may appear safe and clean to drink but most natural water sources have huge amounts of bacteria that can make you very sick. Be sure to bring your own water or water filter for drinking.



- ▶ If you are taking food on your hike, it's a good idea to keep it in tightly sealed containers so as not to attract animals.
- ▶ Your children are likely to see plants, insects and animals they have never seen before. Take a field guide with you so that you can find out if a plant is poisonous, match an animal's picture to its name, or identify a species you've never seen before.
- ▶ Sunscreen and insect repellent are necessary when venturing on a hike. Avoid sunburns by wearing head and arm coverings.
- ▶ Be smart about what you put in your backpack. It can become very heavy and tedious and keep you from enjoying your day.
- ▶ The first rule when interacting with the environment is to 'Leave it as you found it'. This rule applies to the trees, the earth, the animals, the campsite - and even the flowers. Teach your children to respect the environment. Carry out all of the garbage you carry in and don't leave food behind to feed the animals.



First Time Hikers

If you are planning your children's first hiking trek, here are a few pointers to keep in mind before you set out on your new adventure.

- ▶ Plan long distance walks (about 2 hours) in natural settings close to home. When your children have mastered a two-hour walk, you can advance them to half-day hikes.
- ▶ Make sure your children have the appropriate hiking footwear.
- ▶ Let your children carry their own backpacks. Keep them light at first and increase the weight over time.
- ▶ Make sure that every child carries a whistle. It's a good idea to teach them how to use it before you start on your hike. Should your children become separated from the pack, they will know how to use it. Consider attaching a lanyard (pictured right) to a whistle and flashlight, and tie them to one of your children's belt loops.
- ▶ Consider introducing hiking to your children when they are 3 to 5 years old. Teach them that this is a 'hike' and they will be expected to walk the entire time but if they get tired, there will be rest times. Parents should be prepared to take more breaks and cover less ground than anticipated.



- ▶ You can simulate camping by pitching a tent in your backyard. If you don't have a backyard, consider pitching a tent inside your home. Let your children sleep in the tent overnight so they get comfortable and feel secure in a new sleeping environment.
- ▶ Observe how your children react to new outdoor situations and adjust your pace and ambition so that hiking remains fun and not an overwhelming challenge.
- ▶ Display enthusiasm and happiness about an upcoming family hiking excursion. Talk about all the things the children will be experiencing.



- ▶ Get them involved in the excitement by including them in the planning of the hiking trip. Ask your children for ideas and try to implement their suggestions into the hike.
- ▶ Consider allowing your children to take a friend with them on the hiking trip. They might enjoy themselves more and enjoy the companionship.
- ▶ Before you venture out it is a good idea to do a little research on your hiking destination to determine if campfires are permitted.
- ▶ Choose a campsite or hiking destination that is no more than 1 to 2 miles from a trailhead. If for some reason you need to bail out, you won't have that far to travel.
- ▶ If your children find something rather interesting, like a pretty-coloured bug, regardless of your planned destination arrival time, allow them the time to stay engaged and curious.
- ▶ If a hiking trip turns unpleasant or tedious, adjust your expectations and re-think your plan. If your children are having a difficult time on the hike this will have a negative impact on their attitude when you plan another hike and it may take a long time to reverse.
- ▶ Let your children participate in your responsibilities by allowing them to carry a few lightweight items such as, snacks, water, rain gear or a sleeping bag in their kid-sized backpack.
- ▶ If there are two or more adults in your hiking party, a very good safety measure is to have one in the lead and one at the end of the line - with all the children in the middle.

- ▶ Teach your children to take part in camp chores. By assigning specific details for each child, they gain a sense of responsibility and caring for themselves, their family and the environment.





Bicycle Safety

According to BMJ Research for Injury Prevention in Canada, during the past 10 years there were 23,685 hospital admissions due to bicycle-related injuries among Canadian children age 5–19 (76% boys and 24% girls). 22% of the children sustained a head injury while 78% had other injuries due to a bicycle incident. 22% of boys and 21% of girls incurred a head injury.

It's vitally important for parents and children to go over all the safety tips for riding their bicycles.

- ▶ Children should always wear a bicycle helmet when riding their bicycles. A helmet should be worn so that it is level on the head, about two fingers above the eyebrows - not tipped forward or backward. The strap should be securely fastened and the helmet should not be able to move in any direction.
- ▶ Teach children to follow the rules of the road. Children should ride on the same side of the road and in the same direction as vehicular traffic.
- ▶ Children should walk their bicycles across busy streets and roads.
- ▶ Children under the age of 10 should not be riding their bicycles on the road without adult supervision.
- ▶ Plan a safe cycling route with your children.
- ▶ Children should not be allowed to ride their bicycles at night.
- ▶ Do not push or encourage your children to ride a two-wheeled bicycle until they are ready – about the age of six.
- ▶ Take your child shopping with you to purchase a bicycle to obtain the proper fit. Purchase a bicycle that is the right size and not a size that your child has to grow into.
- ▶ Check that your children's bicycles still fit from last year. Perhaps the training wheels need to be taken off or the seat needs adjusting. Are the reflectors, horns and water bottle holders securely attached and in good working order?
- ▶ Even though the Canadian law does not require adults to wear helmets when bicycle riding, parents should wear helmets to be good role models for their children and for their own personal safety.



Did you know that...

- a child's skull is only 1 centimetre thick and can fracture on impact at only **7 km** per hour.
- children on bicycles often travel at these speeds or faster.

Sports Safety

To ensure that sports are safe and a lot of fun for children, parents and coaches should mutually agree that injury prevention is a top priority. One in three children who play team sports will sustain injuries severe enough to require medical attention. While you can't prevent every bump and bruise, you can help prevent injuries by following basic safety rules and tips.



- ➔ Children that want to play contact sports should be grouped according to their weight, size, and skill rather than by age. Sometimes children who are small for their age attempt to perform beyond their capacity in order to keep up with larger and stronger peers, which can result in an increased risk of injury. Inquire as to how a particular sports program groups its participants.
- ➔ Be sure all sports equipment and playing fields are safe and properly maintained. Over 200,000 injuries occur on playground equipment each year, and unsecured or defective equipment can increase the risk of harm to your children.
- ➔ It is common for parents to underestimate the length of time their children should take off from a particular sport. Children who belong to team sports should take a 2 to 3 month break from their specific sport each year to prevent overuse, overtraining and burnout. We suggest that your children take up another sport so that they receive a body break.
- ➔ At the beginning of the school year, children who want to take part in team sports should have a Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation (PPE) by your Family Physician or Paediatrician to check for any underlying medical conditions thereby preventing potential medical emergencies.
- ➔ Before physical activity ensues, children should understand the importance of stretching their muscles and doing a 10-minute cardio warm-up, such as jogging in place and jumping jacks.
- ➔ Make sure your children use properly sized, safety-tested, and well-fitting protective gear



that is appropriate for a particular sport, and that they understand the correct use of the protective gear.

- ➔ Never push a child to play a sport if he/she feels uncomfortable or physically incapable of participating in the sport. Likewise, don't push a child who is injured while playing to continue playing or 'work through the pain' of an injury. Even if a child normally enjoys a particular sport, don't insist on participation if he/she is tired or unwell.
- ➔ Head injuries sustained by children while playing sports needs to be taken seriously. Parents and coaches should take preventative measures including educating themselves about signs and symptoms of concussions and the policies for sports injuries within their sports league. A child with an undiagnosed concussion can be at risk for brain damage and potential disability. A child that displays any of symptoms listed below should be taken to the hospital immediately.

- ▶ a change in level of alertness
- ▶ extreme sleepiness
- ▶ a bad headache
- ▶ confusion
- ▶ repeated vomiting
- ▶ seizure



- ➔ Always seek medical attention when your child becomes injured, or develops a persistent symptom that interferes with his/her ability to play.
- ➔ To avoid dehydration children should drink 30 minutes before they start to play their sport, and every 15 to 20 minutes during physical activity. If it is hot and humid, children should go to the sidelines regularly to drink cool water and drink until they are no longer thirsty. For children under the age of 10 encourage them to drink another half-cup and for children older than 10 encourage them to drink another cup. The amount of fluid each child needs depends on their body size, how hot and humid it is, and how hard they are exercising.
- ➔ Is there a sport safety clinic for children in your neighbourhood? If so, consider attending. How better to learn ways to keep your children healthy and injury free.

- ➔ Children who play sports like to watch their sports' heroes participate in games. They often get hurt while playing sports and children watch and learn through repetition that being injured is just part of the game and a natural occurrence. The problem is that this attitude is hurting your children – remember they're still children. Parents need to teach their children that if they follow basic safety rules and practices and wear the appropriate safety equipment, they can prevent injuries and stay healthy throughout their lives playing sports.



- Before children start a new sport or activity, make sure they learn how to play properly. Learning the rules, techniques and appropriate behaviour for a certain sport or activity will help children avoid unnecessary injuries.
- Children should wear sunscreen when playing outdoors. Make sure sunscreen is applied at least 15 minutes before the game begins and reapply as directed.
- Inquire about the facilities and coaches at your sports centre. Certified athletic trainers are present at many facilities that have experience in preventing and recognizing sports injuries.



Resources

For in depth information on Water Safety including Diving Safety, Drowning Prevention, and Swimming Pool and Chemical Safety, please click on [Children's Safety Association of Canada - Water Safety.](#)

[Safety in Backyard Pools](#) - Canadian Red Cross

