



Summer Safety Suggestions

Health and safety go hand in hand so, to keep your family safe and healthy, follow these suggestions to help you get more out of summer:

Fun in the sun

- While a sunny day puts a smile on everyone's face, a red face from sun exposure can mean trouble. Avoid direct sun exposure from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are the strongest. Even on a cloudy day, protect yourself and your children from ultraviolet rays as they can penetrate clouds and still damage skin. If you must be in the sun during peak hours, and especially at the beach, use an umbrella and wear sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) 30 as recommended by the Canadian Dermatology Association. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure and reapply after swimming or strenuous exercise.
- More than 77,000 Canadians are diagnosed with skin cancer every year. Skin damage accumulates over time so it's important to check your skin regularly. If a mole changes, increases in size, changes colour, bleeds or itches, see your health care provider. Dermatologists also recommend you avoid both artificial and natural tanning.
- Always wear sunglasses with both UVA and UVB protection because the thinning of the ozone layer has resulted in more dangerous ultraviolet rays that can not only cause skin cancer but may lead to ocular lesions such as cataracts.
- If you take medication, be sure you understand whether it can cause sensitivity to the sun, which can mean discomfort such as redness, irritation and swelling.

Sports and health

- Always wear the proper protective equipment including helmet and elbow and knee pads as protection from injury when bicycling or inline skating and when riding a skateboard or scooter.
- Make sure everyone's helmet fits correctly and is worn whenever going for a bike ride. Young children should stay off the road and older children should be well trained in the rules of the road before they venture out on the street.

The great outdoors

- If you plan to camp or hike in remote areas, remember the great outdoors is the natural habitat of wild animals including black bears. Protect yourself by keeping human food and garbage away from your camp site and never eat (even snacks) in your tent, never sleep in the same clothes you wore while cooking and, if possible, store food in bear-resistant containers.
- Ensure children remain a safe distance from a camp fire and be sure to extinguish the fire with plenty of water.
- Children should always be with a buddy when leaving the campsite and adults should always know their whereabouts.
- If your child is travelling with others, be sure a responsible adult knows about your child's life-threatening food or insect allergies and is ready to deal with them.
- Always take along a first aid and safety kit.

Extreme heat

- Extreme heat affects everyone differently depending on age and health condition. Heat waves can also lead to air quality problems that can affect respiratory or cardiovascular diseases and heat can aggravate conditions such as heart disease, kidney disease or psychiatric disorders.
- It is important to keep yourself as cool as possible and drink a glass of water every 15 minutes to prevent heat cramps and heat exhaustion. If nauseated, discontinue water and seek medical attention. A person suffering from heat/sun stroke may experience throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion and unconsciousness and should be taken to hospital as soon as possible.
- During periods of extreme heat, plan your day so you stay out of the heat, rest in the shade and limit your activity during the hottest part of the day.

For more information on these and other safety topics, visit www.safecanada.ca.

We welcome your comments and story ideas. Call Jane Chartley at 1-800-667-4511 or visit our website at www.medavie.bluecross.ca.