

## SAFETY TIPS FOR OUTDOOR SUMMER FUN

Summer is fun for the whole family – there are so many things to do. Here are some ways to keep everyone safe outdoors.

### Heading outdoors for a picnic or barbecue?

Foodborne bacteria love food and warm weather too. Follow these food safety tips to reduce the risk of foodborne illness when eating outdoors:



- Some sites may not have many facilities, so be prepared. Keep menus simple and do some food preparation at home, such as washing and cutting up fruits and vegetables.
- Chill or freeze food ahead of time, and pack in insulated coolers just before you head out. Add ice or frozen gel packs to keep perishable food at 4°C (40°F). Blocks of ice last longer than ice cubes.
- Pack raw meat, fish and poultry in leak proof containers and put them at the bottom of the cooler to prevent contaminating other foods. Even better, use a separate cooler for meat, fish and poultry. At the picnic site, put coolers in the shade.
- If you cannot keep food cold, bring canned food, fruits and vegetables, hard cheeses, peanut butter, crackers, soup and sauce mixes, juice boxes or powdered drinks, and dried pasta.
- Don't leave perishable food in the Danger Zone (4°C - 60°C) for more than two hours. If it is really hot outside, play it safe and eat the food within an hour if you can't keep it hot or cold.
- Preheat grills and barbecues and cook food to safe internal temperatures. See the chart below. Bring a thermometer to check the temperatures. Colour is not a reliable way to tell if meat is safely cooked.

**Is it DONE?** 

Check internal temperatures with a thermometer

<b>74°C</b>	Poultry, casseroles, leftovers	<b>165°F</b>
<b>71°C</b>	Ground meats (beef, veal, lamb); pork; egg dishes	<b>160°F</b>
<b>63°C</b>	Beef, lamb, veal, steak, roast, seafood	<b>145°F</b>
<b>60°C</b>	Holding cooked foods	<b>140°F</b>

[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/envhealth](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/envhealth)

- Pack dishcloths, tea towels, and dish soap for washing dishes and cleanup. If safe water is not available at the site, bring treated tap water from home in a clean container. Disposable

plates and utensils are another option. Don't forget to bring a good supply of garbage bags. Uncontained garbage can attract pests or wildlife.

For more information, go to:

[Picknicking, Hiking & Camping, Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)

[Food Safety Tips for Barbecuing, Health Canada, Food and Nutrition](#)

[Summer Food Safety, Health Canada, It's Your Health](#)

[Food Safety and the Barbecue Season, Alberta Health Services, Environmental Health, Calgary and Area](#)

### **Indoors or outdoors, handwashing never takes a vacation**

- Encourage everyone to wash their hands before preparing food or eating, flossing or putting in contact lenses; and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, blowing your nose, handling animals and pets, cleaning up animal droppings and handling garbage. Tip: Have everyone get into the habit of washing their hands after they have been outside.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds, rinse and dry your hands. Plain soap is fine - antibacterial soap is not necessary.
- If soap and water is not available at an outdoor site, choose other options. Bring tap water from home in a clean container and some hand soap; bottled water; alcohol based hand gel that contains at least 60% alcohol or hand wipes.
- Tip: Alcohol hand gels do not work if your hands are visibly dirty or greasy. Use towelettes that contain detergent and then use alcohol hand gel.

For more information, go to:

[Handwashing Resources, Alberta Health Services, Environmental Health, Calgary and Area](#)

[Handwashing, Do Bugs Need Drugs?](#)

[Clean your hands – wash properly, Influenza Self-Care, Alberta Health Services](#)

### **Safe water**

- Use water from a safe (treated) source. This could include treated tap water brought from home in a clean container, or bottled water. According to Health Canada, water treated with chlorine or iodine is safe to drink for several days without refrigeration. Water treated by other means should be used in two days.
- Water from streams, ponds, lakes and rivers is not safe for drinking, handwashing, brushing your teeth or washing dishes. The water might look clean but it may contain bacteria, viruses and parasites.
- Untreated water can be purified by bringing it to a rolling boil for one minute, or by filtration and chemical disinfection.

For more information, go to:

[Drinking Water Away from Home, Health Canada](#)

### **Roadside stands**

- When buying juice or cider at roadside stands, farmers' markets or grocery stores, make sure the products are pasteurized (heat treated). This is a special concern for young children, pregnant women, seniors and people with weakened immune systems. In recent years unpasteurized juice or cider has been linked to foodborne outbreaks of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection in the United States and Canada.

For more information, go to:

[Unpasteurized fruit juice and cider, It's Your Health, Health Canada](#)

### **Sport fishing consumption guidelines for fish species that may contain mercury**

- Fishing in Alberta lakes and rivers? Check the current Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations for their recommendations on fish species that may contain mercury.
- Open the link below, and then go to the Helpful Information section on the main page. Scroll down to Mercury Contamination in Fish and click on the link for a chart of the water bodies containing fish species that may have mercury contamination. It is recommended that women of child-bearing age and children under the age of 11 not eat these fish, and that healthy adults eat the amounts given in the table.

[2009 Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations](#)

### **Insect repellents**

- To protect yourself and your family from West Nile virus, use an insect repellent containing DEET and wear long-sleeve tops and pants when outdoors at dawn and dusk.
- Do not use insect repellents on babies less than 6 months old. Keep them safe with hats, long-sleeved tops and pants. Use mosquito netting to keep insects from biting children in baby strollers.
- If there is a high risk of complications from insect bites, use one application of DEET per day for children 6 months to 2 years, and use the least concentrated formula (10% DEET or less). For children 2 – 12 years, use insect repellent no more than 3 times a day.
- Make sure that screened windows and doors fit properly and do not have any holes.
- Remove standing water from plant pots. Empty and refill bird baths weekly.

For more information, go to:

[Fight the Bite - Use Insect Repellent, Alberta Health Services](#)

### **Sun safety**

It's fun to be outdoors with family and friends, but we need protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays.

When heading outdoors, stay in the shade, cover up and use sunscreen

- Wear protective clothing, wide-brimmed hats, and sunglasses with 100% UV protection.

- Apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Look for the term “broad spectrum” on the label. It means the sunscreen helps protect against UVA and UVB rays. Also look for an expiry date on the package. Toss out expired sunscreen.
- Apply sunscreen generously 20 minutes before going outside. Apply more sunscreen 20 minutes after being outside to maximize your protection. Then reapply sunscreen every 2 hours, and after swimming or sweating. Do not forget to put sunscreen on the ears, nose, and lips, the back of the neck and knees, and the tops of the feet.

Protect babies and young children from the sun:

- Sunburns can be very serious for babies and young children. Their sensitive skin burns easily. Keep babies under one year of age out of direct sunlight to prevent dehydration and skin damage. Always keep them in the shade; under a tree, umbrella or stroller canopy.
- Babies and children should wear protective wide-brimmed hats and loose fitting clothing, such as long sleeved tops and pants and sunglasses. Try to keep toddlers and young children out of the sun, especially between 11 am and 4 pm
- Do not use sunscreen on babies under 6 months. For older children, use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, and when children have been in the water. Waterproof sunscreen is available.
- When using both sunscreen and DEET, apply the sunscreen first and then apply the DEET. Follow the directions on each package.

For more information, go to:

[Sun Safety Resources, Canadian Dermatology Association](#)

[UV Index and Sun Protection, Environment Canada](#)

[Babies, Children and Sun Safety, Health Canada](#)

[Sun Safety, Health Canada](#)

[Be Sun Safe When Heading Outdoors, Alberta Health Services, Environmental Health, Calgary and Area](#)

### **Staying healthy at the pool**

To prevent the spread of germs around the pool:

- Shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet. Anyone with diarrhea, including children in diapers, should stay out of the water.
- Take children for bathroom breaks often. Encourage them to wash their hands. Check diapers often. Change diapers in the bathroom or diaper-changing area, not at the poolside. Wash your hands and your children’s hands after changing diapers.
- Don’t swallow pool water or get it in your mouth.

For more information, go to:

[Six Steps of Healthy Swimming: Protection Against Recreational Water Illnesses, Centers for Disease Control](#)

### Visiting petting zoos, fairs, farms and animal exhibits

As soon as you enter the facility grounds, look for the handwashing stations. Handwashing is very important after petting animals or touching animal enclosures, and before eating and drinking. Animals can carry germs that can be passed to people, and many people, especially children, have become ill with *E. coli* infection or other illnesses after visiting animal exhibits.

Other Precautions:

- Supervise children under 5 years of age
- Help young children wash their hands.
- Keep food and drinks out of animal areas. Children should eat only when they are well away from the animals, and have washed their hands.
- Put away infant pacifiers when going through animal areas.
- Do not let children drink unpasteurized (raw) milk

For more information, go to:

[Tips for preventing infections from pets and petting zoos, Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)  
[Staying healthy at animal exhibits this summer, Centers for Disease Control](#)

For more information, please call the Environmental Health Program, Alberta Health Services at 403-943-2288 or click on the Environmental Health website:

<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/publichealth/envhealth/>

Original date: May 2008

Updated: June 2009