

THINKFIRST CANADA'S CAMPING AND HIKING INJURY PREVENTION TIPS

Camping and hiking are fun activities for all ages and various skill levels. With 41 national parks in Canada and hundreds of provincial parks, it's vital to be prepared when hitting the trails. Here are ThinkFirst Canada's top tips for reducing your risk of sustaining a catastrophic injury while camping and hiking. This information is taken from Chapter 58 "Camping and Hiking" in the ThinkFirst book entitled *Catastrophic Injuries in Sports and Recreation: Causes and Prevention – A Canadian Study* edited by Charles H. Tator and published by the University of Toronto Press in 2008.



TOP TIPS:

Around the campsite:

- Act and drink responsibly in a camping or hiking activity.
- Arrive at the campsite with enough daylight to properly set up and check for hazards.
- Hazards include: broken glass, sharp objects, poison ivy, bee hives, ants, etc.
- Choose a site of appropriate size to have enough room for your equipment.
- Clean your campsite regularly and properly dispose of all trash and recycling following visits in order to prevent attracting bears.

Campfire Safety:

- Do not start a fire using flammable liquids; use paper or kindling instead.
- Build fires outdoors only. Light barbecues and grills on sand or within an approved campfire area. Keep flammable material at least two metres away.
- Be sure to have an appropriate clearing for the fire and never leave the fire unattended.
- Properly put out your fire and stay until the ashes are cool to the touch.
- Keep children away from the fire and explain the hazards of a fire to your camping party.
- Never place your hands into the fire to rearrange the wood. Use a long, smooth stick instead.
- Keep fire fighting equipment near the fire (e.g. shovels, bowl/pail of water, sand, etc.).

Wildlife Safety:

- Never approach wild animals.
- Never leave food out. Place food in sealed containers and place in a locked environment (e.g. a car or hanging from a tree downwind of the campsite).
- Do not eat unfamiliar vegetation.
- Do not drink unfamiliar water. Use water purifiers and/or boil water when using unknown water sources.

Hiking:

- Never hike alone! Always travel with a companion and tell others where you are going.
- Follow marked trails and carry maps and orientation equipment if in an unfamiliar region.
- Take proper care in protecting against exposure to the heat, the cold, dehydration, and insects. This can be done by carrying water, dressing appropriately, and using sunscreen and insect repellents.
- Never overload yourself with equipment. Carry only the necessities and make sure that you don't have too much in your pack.
- Wear appropriate footwear (e.g. hiking boots).
- Avoid alcohol, especially on unfamiliar or rough terrain.

Remember: thinkfirst.ca before you play!