

## Your Health This Summer

During the COVID-19 pandemic, British Columbians are asked to stay home. The more you stay at home, the safer it will be for everyone in your community. It reduces the possibility of spreading COVID-19 to others.

Physical distancing from others is important. Staying away from others is the only way to keep people from getting the disease. No community is immune. COVID-19 can be spread by people who have minimal symptoms. Someone who seems healthy could spread it to parents, grandparents or other people in our community. Some of these people could get seriously ill from this virus. Stay home except for essential errands.

We all want to make the most of beautiful summer weather while practicing safe physical distancing. Please see our [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#) health feature for more information.

If you are spending more time outdoors, you may increase your risk of getting injured. You could be exposed to bugs and heat. Wildfires may expose you to smoke.

To help you enjoy the summer months, see the information below on taking care of yourself and your family.

### Featured Topics

#### Food Safety

Most food borne illnesses are preventable. Learn how to safely prepare and store your food for summer barbeque, picnic and camping meals. Click on the links below for more information.

- [Disinfecting Drinking Water \(HealthLinkBC File #49b\)](#)
- [Food Safety: Easy Ways to Make Food Safer \(HealthLinkBC File #59a\)](#)
- [Food Safety for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables \(HealthLinkBC File #59b\)](#)
- [Home Canning – How to Avoid Botulism \(HealthLinkBC File #22\)](#)
- [Government of Canada: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) and food safety](#)
- [Summer Food Safety](#)
- [Unpasteurized Fruit Juices and Ciders: A Potential Health Risk \(HealthLinkBC File #72\)](#)

#### Insect Bites and Stings

You are likely to come into contact with biting and stinging insects during the summer months. Don't let bugs stop you from enjoying the warm weather. To learn what you can do to prevent being bitten or stung, click on the links below.

- [Insect Bites and Stings and Spider Bites](#)
- [Insect Repellents and DEET \(HealthLinkBC File #96\)](#)
- [Preventing Insect Stings](#)
- [Tick Bites and Disease \(HealthLinkBC File #01\)](#)

## Physical Activity

The summer months are a great time for outdoor activities such as camping, hiking and biking. For information on how you and your family can enjoy the outdoors while staying safe and healthy, click on the links below.

- [BCCDC: Physical Distancing](#)
- [Health Benefits of Physical Activity](#)
- [Health Risks in the Wilderness \(HealthLinkBC File #24\)](#)
- [Petting Zoo and Open Farm Visits \(HealthLinkBC File #61b\)](#)
- [Preventing Children's Injuries From Sports and Other Activities](#)
- [Quick Tips: Staying Active in Hot Weather](#)
- [Walking Log](#)

For physical activity or exercise advice, you can call **8-1-1** to speak with a qualified exercise professional Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm Pacific Time.

## Sun and Heat

One of the best parts about summer are the long, warm days. However, spending too much time in the sun or heat may affect your health if you aren't prepared. To learn how to protect yourself and your family, click on the links below.

- [Beat The Heat](#)
- [Canada Safety Council: Hot Car Warning](#)
- [Heat-related Illness \(HealthLinkBC File #35\)](#)
- [Sun Safety for Children \(HealthLinkBC File #26\)](#)
- [Sunburn](#)
- [Ultraviolet Radiation \(HealthLinkBC File #11\)](#)

## Swimming and Water Safety

Taking a dip in a pool, lake, river or the ocean is a fun and enjoyable way to beat the summer heat. Before you head to the water, remember to check our [Public Health Alerts In Your Area page](#) for your local health authority pool, lake, river or beach advisories. For information to help you and your family stay safe in and around the water this summer, click on the links below.

- [Child Safety: Preventing Drowning](#)
- [Safety Tips for Swimmers \(HealthLinkBC File #39\)](#)
- [Swimmer's Ear \(Otitis Externa\)](#)
- [Swimmer's Itch \(HealthLinkBC File #52\)](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health – Beach water quality reports](#)

## Travel Health

Staying close to home can help contain the spread of COVID-19. Some provinces and territories may have extra regulations about interprovincial travel. Please check your destination for any COVID-19 related domestic travel information.

All international travellers returning to British Columbia are required by law to self-isolate for 14 days upon their arrival and complete a self-isolation plan. To learn more about travel, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, click on the links below.

- [Diabetes: Travel Tips](#)
- [Travel and COVID-19](#)
- [Travel During Pregnancy](#)
- [Travel Health](#)
- [Travel Immunizations for Adults \(HealthLinkBC File #41c\)](#)
- [Travelling with children \(HealthLinkBC File #41d\)](#)

## Wildfires

Wildfire season is now underway and the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing. Every year in British Columbia there are hundreds or thousands of wildfires (also called forest fires), which can affect your health and safety. Exposure to air pollution can irritate your lungs, which causes inflammation and can alter your immune response. This can make it more difficult to fight respiratory infections such as COVID-19.

- [Wildfires and Your Health](#)
- [Wildfire: Its Effects on Drinking Water Quality \(HealthLinkBC File #49f\)](#)

## Useful Websites

### BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC)

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. They provide provincial and national leadership in public health through surveillance, detection, prevention and consultation.

The BCCDC is encouraging everyone to be aware of disease-causing ticks and prevention of Lyme disease that can result from a tick bite. Learn what you can do to help keep you and your family safe:

- [Lyme Disease \(Borrelia burgdorferi infection\)](#)
- [Tick Talk](#)
- [Tick Talk \(video\)](#)

### Health Canada

Health Canada is the federal government department that is responsible for helping Canadians maintain and improve their health. Learn more about staying safe in the sun and heat:

- [Government of Canada – Sunscreen tips](#)
- [Government of Canada – Stay sun safe](#)
- [Government of Canada – Staying Healthy in the Heat](#)
- [Government of Canada – Keep children cool!](#)
- [Government of Canada – It's way too hot! Protect Yourself from Extreme Heat](#)

**Last Reviewed:** June 2020

---

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles) or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.