



How to *avoid encounters* with black bears while enjoying the outdoors.

Black bears are nothing like friendly cartoon bears. They are smart, curious, powerful and potentially dangerous. And they don't like surprises. If you are a hiker, cyclist, jogger, berry picker, or you plan to spend some time in "bear country", you need to know how bears behave so that you can avoid an encounter.



BEARS CAN
BE DANGEROUS

In an immediate emergency, call your local police or 911. To report bear problems call:

1 866 514-2327

(1 866 514-BEAR)

TTY 705 945-7641

For more information, visit our website:

ontario.ca/bearwise

Bears usually avoid humans. Generally you won't see a bear even if one is close by. Remember, you are a visitor in the bear's home range, so do all you can to avoid encounters.

- Make noise as you move through wooded areas – especially in areas where background noise is high, such as near streams and waterfalls. Singing, whistling or talking will alert bears to your presence, giving them a chance to avoid you
- Travel with others if possible
- Be aware of your surroundings by keeping your eyes and ears open:
 - Do not wear music headphones
 - Keep an eye out for signs of bears, such as tracks, claw marks on trees, flipped-over rocks or fresh bear droppings
- Carry and have readily accessible a whistle or an air horn, and bear pepper spray. Know how to use this spray – practise on a stationery object to get the feel for how the canister sprays, and to know its limitations
- Consider carrying a long-handled axe, particularly if you are in "back country"
- Avoid strong fragrances that may cause a bear to be curious; put any food you are carrying in sealed containers in your pack
- If you are out with a dog, control it. Uncontrolled, untrained dogs may actually lead a bear to you
- While berry picking, occasionally scan your surroundings to check for bears, and rise slowly from your crouched position so you don't startle any nearby bears. They may not recognize you as a human when you are in a crouched position

*There's more ...
see over!*





What to do *if you encounter* a black bear while enjoying the outdoors.

Bears usually avoid humans. But if you do encounter one, it's important to remember that they are powerful and potentially dangerous animals. If you are a hiker, cyclist, jogger, berry picker, or anyone who plans to spend some time in "bear country", there are some things you should do if you encounter a bear.



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If you encounter a bear:

- If the bear is not paying any attention to you, slowly and quietly back away while watching the bear to make sure it isn't following you
- Do not approach the bear to get a better look
- If the bear obviously knows you are there, raise your arms to let the bear know you are a human. Make yourself look as big as possible. Speak in a firm but non-threatening voice while looking at the bear and backing away
- Watch the bear to gauge its reaction to you. Generally, the noisier the bear is, the less dangerous it is, providing you don't approach the bear. If a bear huffs, pops its jaw or stomps its paws on the ground, it wants you to back away and give it space
- If a bear closely approaches you, drop any food you are carrying and continue backing up
- If the bear continues to try to approach, stand your ground and be aggressive – use your whistle or air horn, yell, stand tall, wave your arms and throw objects
- If a bear keeps advancing and is getting close, continue to stand your ground. Use your bear pepper spray and anything else to threaten or distract the bear – bears will often first test to see if it is safe to approach you
- Do **not** run or climb a tree. Bears can run faster and climb better than you
- If the bear makes contact, fight back with everything you have

If you are concerned, contact the local Ministry of Natural Resources office in the area you are going to visit to determine whether there have been any reports of bear encounters or conflicts.

There's more ...
see over!