

Day Hike Info Sheet

This safety guide is intended to inform you of the basic knowledge you must have before venturing into the wilderness on day trips. The information in this guide is aimed at people who will use established trail systems rather than the "off trail bushwhacker." For those unfamiliar with backcountry travel, it is advised that they first gain experience on local hiking trails.

Recommended Equipment

On Your Body

It is recommended that you dress in layers for hiking and wear fast-drying clothes that wick perspiration. Wearing only one heavy sweater or jacket can keep you from being able to adjust your clothing to maintain proper body temperature.

Depending on conditions you may need:

- Boots with ankle protection and sturdy soles
- Wool socks (one thick and one thin pair)
- Gaiters (short type recommended to prevent sand and gravel from entering boots)
- Trousers (not denim jeans)

In Your Pack

- Sunglasses
- Rain gear (make sure it is waterproof)
- Extra socks
- Windproof jacket
- Mittens for cold weather
- Mountaineering gloves for rock scrambling
- Head covering such as hat or toque
- Water bottle
- Food for the day
- Extra food (for unexpected delays)
- Waterproof matches, candle, and fire starter
- Knife (Swiss Army type is very versatile)
- Map and compass
- Sunscreen (The sun does shine in the summer!)
- First Aid kit
- Moleskin
- Whistle
- Insect repellent
- Flashlight

Nutrition

Food Exhaustion

If you do not eat enough food while engaged in heavy exercise, you may become dizzy, weak, and feel nauseated. A good dinner the night before your trip and a hearty breakfast in the morning are a must. Missing a meal or fasting may lead to food exhaustion, which in turn can contribute to hypothermia.

Small Snacks

Frequently eating small snacks will allow you to keep up a good pace and will maintain a high level of energy. Eating one large meal on the trail should be avoided as this will tend to slow the body down.

Mountain Mix, Trail Mix or Gorp

A mix of nuts, raisins, chocolate chips, candies and granola will taste good and keep for a long time. A mix like this kept close at hand will provide lots of needed energy.

Liquid intake

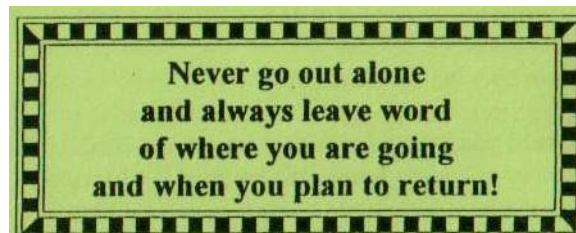
Normal daily intake should be about two liters even if it is cold and wet. Carry a full water bottle or hydration pack on all trips. Avoiding dehydration is an important summer safety factor so drink plenty of liquids and remember to have adequate salt intake if sweating.

Blisters

A gram of prevention is worth a kilo of cure! Blisters can turn an enjoyable day into an unforgettable nightmare. At the first sign of a hot spot, remove boots and socks and apply moleskin or tape over the red spot and surrounding area. DO NOT peel the blister. If necessary, a blister can be drained by popping with a sterilized point before taping.

Ticks

Do not try to pull the insect out if it has imbedded itself in the skin. Bum it with a cigarette or cut off its oxygen by applying a substance such as alcohol to the body. When it lets go you can remove it carefully in one piece.



On the Trail

- A group should have one leader and large groups should appoint a sweep to stay at the back of the pack and make sure nobody falls behind.
- Always keep in touch with the person behind you.
- After a short time on the trail, stop to check boots and adjust clothing.
- Pace your hike by the slowest member of the group.
- Watch the weather; it can change very quickly.
- When walking in alpine meadows stay on established trails.
- When on a switchback trail resist the temptation to "cut the corners." Shortcuts lead to erosion of the bank and eventual disintegration of the trail.
- Don't leave any garbage on the trails. If you pack it in, pack it out.
- Orange and banana peels are not instantly degradable, take them home with you.
- Don't feed birds or other wildlife. It does them more harm than good.
- Stick to the designated trail and avoid exploring unmarked areas or finding shortcuts.

Hypothermia

What is it?

A lowering of the body core temperature. Your normal body temperature is 37.4 degrees C (98.6 degrees F). A drop of only 5 degrees is very serious. Few people whose body temperature drops below 31 degrees C (88 degrees F) survive. Hypothermia can occur in an air temperature as high as 5 degrees C (41 degrees F).

How does it happen?

Being cold and wet and exhausted all contribute. Many people have died of hypothermia because they thought they could keep warm by moving and not stopping to take the necessary precautions such as adding a sweater or putting on rain gear.

What are the symptoms?

EARLY: shivering (continued shivering means continued deterioration)

SERIOUS SYMPTOMS: slurred speech, impaired judgment, weakness, loss of coordination

FINAL SYMPTOMS: unconsciousness

What can I do?

Get the victim into warm clothes. Make him rest. Give him hot drinks and food. If his condition is very serious, put him in a sleeping bag with another person. Make a fire. Put up a tent or make a shelter for the victim. As soon as the patient is able, evacuate him to a hospital for further treatment. Never think that you can continue your trip after one of your party has had hypothermia — go home and recover and return another time.

Information in this guide is taken from "HIKING: A Guide to Safety in British Columbia," prepared by the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia.

Hyperthermia

What is it?

A raising of the body core temperature. Your normal body temperature is 37.4 degrees C (98.6 degrees F). An increase of only 5 degrees is serious. Few people whose body temperature goes above 41 degrees C (106 degrees F) survive without immediate treatment.

How does it happen?

The air is drier, and the sun is hotter the higher you go. You can lose up to 12 liters a day just from sweating and breathing. When you sweat you lose salt which must be replaced.

What are the symptoms?

A hot, dry, red face, dizziness, headache, muscle cramps and high body temperature.

What can I do?

Treat immediately. Cool the body, using cold water, snow, shade, fanning, cold salty drinks, and rest. Unconsciousness, delirium, or convulsions are symptoms of more serious heatstroke; rapid cooling and medical assistance are usually essential to recovery.

REMEMBER: When the weather is really hot, TAKE IT EASY!

