



# Make the Most of Summer

## **Ready for Summer Fun?**

Have you got any fun plans for the summer? Maybe you already do! With the days getting longer, the sun shining, and the warm air inviting us outdoors, Utah is calling. From swimming at Jordanelle Reservoir, paddleboarding at Bear Lake, hiking trails in Big Cottonwood Canyon, camping under the stars, or simply grilling with friends, there's something for everyone.

Whether you've already started your summer adventures or are just planning ahead, now is the perfect time to think about safety, sustainability, and well-being. By being mindful of potential risks and the impact we have on nature, we can enjoy summer fully—without injury, illness, or harm to the outdoors we love.

## Why Summer Safety Matters

Summer is exciting, but it can bring hidden dangers: heat-related illnesses, dehydration, sunburn, water accidents, and insect-borne illnesses which can quickly turn a joyful day outdoors into an emergency. Noticing how you feel is the first step in preventing more serious issues. Ignoring these signals can turn a small problem into something more serious, like heat stroke, severe sunburn, or even accidents on the trail.

At the same time, summer is when Utah's wildlife and ecosystems are most active. Staying on trails and observing wildlife safely protects plants and animals while letting you enjoy them up close. Safety and environmental care go hand in hand: protect yourself, your loved ones, and the nature that makes summer special.



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## Heat & Hydration: Stay Energized

Utah summers heat up quickly, whether you're exploring mountains, valleys, or deserts. Keeping cool and hydrated is essential.

Drink water frequently, even if you don't feel thirsty, and wear light, breathable clothing. Take breaks in the shade or indoors to avoid overheating.

Listen to your body. Fatigue, dizziness, headaches, or feeling "off" are signs it's time to rest, hydrate, and cool down. Ignoring these signals can lead to more serious heat-related illnesses.

**Heat Exhaustion:** A condition that usually develops from prolonged exposure to heat with dehydration. Symptoms may include:

- Pale, ashen, or moist skin
- Muscle cramps
- Heavy sweating
- Fatigue or weakness
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting

**Action Steps:** Move to shade, drink water, rest, and cool down.

**Heat Stroke:** A medical emergency that requires immediate attention. Symptoms may include:

- Body temperature above 103°F
- Confusion or disorientation
- Rapid heartbeat or breathing
- Hot, dry, or flushed skin

**Action Steps:** Call 911 immediately, move to a cooler area.

## Sun Safety: Protecting Yourself

Sun protection is key to enjoying the outdoors safely. With higher elevations, the sun can be stronger than it feels, making it easier to get too much sun. Taking a few precautions helps prevent painful burns, long-term skin damage, and other health issues.

**Skin:** Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Utah and across the U.S. Using broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher), wearing hats, and covering up with light clothing can protect your skin from harmful UV rays and keep you comfortable while you're outside.

**Eyes:** Your eyes are sensitive to the sun too. Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) light can increase the risk of cataracts and other eye conditions. Sunglasses that provide 95–100% UV protection help shield your eyes while you enjoy the sunshine. It's not necessary for an expensive pair of sunglasses, just effective coverage.

Easy ways to stay safe:

- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen and reapply every couple of hours.
- Wear hats, sunglasses, and light layers.
- Take breaks in the shade during the hottest part of the day.
- Aim for morning or evening activities, when the sun is less intense.

Don't forget to check in with yourself. If your skin starts to feel warm or looks a little pink, that's your sign to reapply sunscreen, cover up, or find some shade. A quick break can make a big difference.

**Eco-friendly tip:** If you're heading to a lake or river, consider using reef-safe sunscreen. It's a simple way to protect aquatic life while still taking care of your skin.



## Outdoor Adventures & Wildlife Awareness

Hiking, biking, and exploring Utah's trails are some of the best parts of summer—but they also come with a few risks. Terrain can be uneven, weather can change quickly, and it's easy to lose track of time or direction if you're not prepared.

Planning ahead can make all the difference. Apps like [AllTrails](#) can help you find trails, check difficulty and elevation levels, read recent reviews, and even download maps so you can stay on route. Having a plan before you head out helps you feel more confident and keeps your adventure safe and enjoyable.

**Eco-friendly tip:** Help take care of Utah's outdoors by sticking to marked trails and packing out everything you bring. Small steps make a big difference.

As you explore, it's important to stay aware of your surroundings. Mosquitoes and ticks can carry illness, and wildlife encounters can happen when you least expect them. Staying on marked trails not only helps prevent injuries but also protects the plants and animals that call these areas home.

Observing wildlife from a safe distance allows you to enjoy the experience without disrupting natural habitats. And as always, listen to your body. If you start to feel tired, dehydrated, or off balance, it's okay to take a break or turn around. The goal is to enjoy the experience safely.

Heading out for a camping trip? A little planning can help everyone stay safe and have fun.

Think about what your group is comfortable doing and the area you'll be exploring. Pack a small first aid kit for scrapes, sprains, or bug bites, and consider taking a First Aid or CPR course, or downloading the free [First Aid app](#), so you know what to do if help is delayed.

**Eco-friendly tip:** Bring reusable water bottles and dishes, and always clean up after yourself. Small actions like these protect Utah's outdoors and keep your adventures sustainable.

Summer is the perfect time to hop on a bike, skateboard, or ride anything on wheels. Wearing a helmet is the simplest way to protect your head and reduce serious injuries.

- Always wear a helmet when biking, skateboarding, or riding anything on wheels.
- Check the fit on kids helmets, they should sit level and snug, not tilted back.
- Lead by example: When adults wear helmets, kids are more likely to follow.
- Use seatbelts on ATVs, stick to age and weight guidelines, and supervise little ones.
- Skip the alcohol, save any celebratory drinks for after the ride.

#### **Before You Leave the House:**

- Check the weather and temperature.
- Plan how much water you'll need to stay hydrated.
- Let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back.
- Bring a fully charged phone and battery pack.
- Review your route or destination.
- Keep emergency contacts handy.
- Pack a first aid kit and check expiration dates.

## **Water Safety**

Whether you're swimming, boating, or paddleboarding, water is one of the biggest draws of summer, but it can also be unpredictable. Staying aware of your surroundings and your energy level helps keep everyone safe so the fun can last all day.



For families especially, water safety is so important. According to the CDC, more children ages 1-4 die from drowning than any other cause of death, and for older children ages 5-14, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death. These numbers are a reminder of how quickly situations can change, even in places that feel safe and familiar. The good news is that simple habits go a long way. Keeping a close eye on children, using life jackets, and paying attention to water conditions can make all the difference. And just like with any summer activity, it's important to listen to your body. Even strong swimmers can get tired. If you start to feel tired, hop out of the water and take a break.

## **Keeping the Whole Family Safe**

Summer adventures are full of energy and excitement, but kids need a little guidance to stay safe in the sun. Encourage them to drink water regularly, take breaks in the shade, and wear hats, sunscreen, and lightweight clothing. Early morning or evening play is safer when it's cooler, and checking playground equipment for hot surfaces helps prevent burns.

Teaching kids a few simple summer safety habits can make a big difference. You can show them how to:

- Notice when they're too hot, tired, or uncomfortable.
- Take breaks and drink water regularly.
- Apply sunscreen and reapply often.
- Stick to marked trails and safe play areas.
- Respect wildlife and plants.
- Follow water safety rules: never swim alone and wear a life jacket.
- Wear a helmet whenever biking, skateboarding, or riding anything on wheels.



Summer adventures are more fun when your dog (or cat!) tag along. As a devoted dog parent, I know that pets need extra care in the sun and during outdoor activities. Our pets don't always notice when they're overheating, thirsty, or tired, so it's up to us to watch for the signs.

**Eco- friendly tip:** Always clean up after your pet. Picking up after your furry friend keeps the outdoors healthy and safe for everyone.

Black asphalt and concrete can get dangerously hot, sometimes reaching over 130°F, and can burn paws in seconds. Stick to grass or shaded paths whenever possible, and check paws for signs of discomfort like limping, paw licking, redness, or blistering.

Keep your pets cool by giving them plenty of water and a shady spot to rest. Watch for signs of heat stress, like heavy panting, restlessness, or trouble standing. If your pet seems overheated, help them cool down slowly with water and contact a veterinarian if you're concerned. Bringing extra water and snacks along ensures your pet stays comfortable and safe while outdoors.

## Rest, Travel, & Enjoy!

Long summer days and road trips can be exhausting. Prioritize rest, take breaks, and listen to your body. Keep water, snacks, and emergency supplies handy while driving to lakes, parks, or campgrounds.

Even when you're taking it easy, small eco-conscious choices, like packing reusable utensils and cleaning up your campsite, help protect Utah's outdoors while you recharge. When you're well-rested and mindful, it's easier to stay safe and enjoy the moment. Summer is all about balance. When you keep health, safety, and the environment in mind during your adventures, you protect yourself, your loved ones, and the natural spaces that make summer unforgettable. Here's to a safe, fun, and relaxing summer!