



Be Bear Wise and avoid bear encounters

Black bears live in most parts of Ontario. Knowing what to do if you encounter a bear is being Bear Wise.

Avoid encounters:


- Make noise when you move through heavily wooded areas, especially if you are near a stream or waterfall where bears may not hear you.
- Singing, whistling or talking will alert bears to your presence, giving them a chance to avoid you.
- Keep your eyes and ears open and watch for signs of a bear, such as tracks, claw marks on trees or droppings.
- DO NOT wear headphones.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially if you are doing activities outside (e.g. hiking, jogging, cycling, gardening, berry picking or camping) where bears may not realize you are there.
- If you are out with a dog, keep it on a leash. Uncontrolled and/or untrained dogs may actually lead a bear to you.

Think about safety:

- Carry a whistle or air horn.
- Carry and understand how to use bear spray.
- If you are in “back country” consider carrying a long-handled axe.

If you do spot a bear:

- Remain calm and do not run, climb a tree or swim.
- Slowly back away while keeping the bear in sight, but do not make direct eye contact.
- Watch the bear and wait for it to leave. If it does not leave, wave your arms and make noise.
- If you are near a building or vehicle, get inside as a precaution.

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Always call 911 in an emergency.
Call 1-866-514-2327 to report a sighting.

What to do if an encounter results in an attack:

- Use bear spray.
- Fight back with everything you have.
- Do not play dead unless you are sure a mother bear is attacking in defence of her cubs.



A bear may:

- Stand on its hind legs to get a better look at you.
- Salivate, exhale loudly, make huffing, moaning, clacking and popping sounds with its mouth, teeth and jaws.
- Lower its head with its ears drawn back while facing you.
- Charge forward, and/or swat the ground with its paws. This is also known as a bluff charge.

The noisier a bear is, the less dangerous it is provided you don't approach it. These are all warning signals a bear gives to let you know you are too close.



Bear attacks are rare.

However, a bear may attack if:

- The bear wants more space.
- It perceives you to be a threat, especially to its cubs or food.
- It is a predatory bear. A predatory bear approaches silently and may continue to approach regardless of your attempts to deter it by yelling, use of bear spray or throwing objects.

Visit [Ontario.ca/bearwise](https://www.ontario.ca/bearwise) for more information.