



# 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 for signs of a bear like tracks, claw marks on trees or droppings.
- DO NOT wear headphones.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially if you are doing activities outside (i.e. 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, 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.
- 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 precaution.

  /ONresources  
TTY 705-945-7641



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.



### Bears may:

- Stand on their 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 the bear is, the less dangerous it is provided you don't approach the bear. These are all warning signals bears give to let you know you are too close.**



### Bears may attack if:

- They perceive you to be a threat to them, their cubs or their food supply. This bear wants more space between you and it. Attacks are exceedingly rare although a bear's aggressive display may seem to suggest otherwise.
- They are a predatory bear. Predatory attacks are extremely rare and usually occur in rural or in remote areas. Male bears are usually responsible for fatal attacks. Predatory bears approach silently, and may continue to approach regardless of your attempts to deter them by yelling or throwing rocks.

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