

# Critical Days of Summer Safety Campaign 2020



Week 6 of 16

## Camping and Hiking

*Camping and hiking are ideal warm weather activities for families. It gives you and your kids a chance to be active, explore nature, and spend time away from TV and video games. Whether you're planning a quick day hike, or a camping adventure, take the time to review some basic safety guidelines before you hit the trail.*

### Hiking

- Plan the hike from start to finish. Don't plan a hike that is beyond your comfort or fitness level.
- Pace yourself and allow extra times for younger children.
- Respect wildlife. Attach a bell to your pack to alert animals so they can hear and avoid you.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- Check the weather and daylight hours.
- Know how to get help in an emergency.
- Never hike alone, never hike in the dark.
- Wear comfortable, rugged shoes and suitable clothing. Layered clothing is preferable.
- Travel light, but bring an emergency survival kit.
- If you become lost:
  - Remain calm and avoid panic.
  - Don't change direction unless you're sure of what you're doing. Leave a note for rescuers.
  - Attract attention with shouts, whistle, or flash light in three bursts indicating distress. Or make a fire with green wood which makes a lot of smoke.
  - Try to keep, warm, dry, sheltered, and supplied with water.



**Ask yourself these simple questions before venturing out...**

**What is my experience level with hiking?** Do I go hiking often or is this my first time hitting the trails?

**How much equipment, food, and water (weight) can I comfortably carry in a backpack?** How long can I carry a backpack with all the essentials?

**Am I physically fit for the hike I would like to do?** Have I practiced hiking up and down steep hills or am I more comfortable on flat, paved paths?

**Have I ever hiked in this type of environment before?** Environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity take time to get used to, especially if you lived in a different environment from the place you are visiting in Japan.

**Am I able to go to higher elevations?** More effort is required to hike at higher elevations due to the reduced amount of oxygen available in the air. Remember that at 8,000 feet you are at risk of altitude illness, a potentially life-threatening condition. If you don't know, ask your healthcare provider.

**Am I hiking alone or do I plan to bring a friend?** It is safer to hike with a companion, but if you prefer to go solo, take extra measures to ensure that you are prepared since you will be traveling alone.

### ATTENTION: Mt. Fuji Closure

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, all major routes on Mt. Fuji will remain closed during the 2020 summer season. Public access to the summit will not be permitted.

## Top tips for camping

### Get vaccinated.

Vaccinations can help protect against certain diseases and conditions while camping. Check with your doctor or nurse to see if you've had all of the recommended vaccines.

### Prepare safe food and water.

Bring safe and healthy foods along on your camping trip. Eating contaminated food and drinking contaminated water can increase the risk of developing certain infectious diseases caused by germs.

Follow these steps to keep your food and water safe:

- Pack foods in tight, waterproof bags or containers.
- Wash hands and surfaces often. Use hand sanitizer if water is not available.
- Separate raw foods from cooked foods.
- Cook foods to proper temperatures
- Chill foods promptly.

### Include safe physical activities.

Camping is a great way to get physical activity. Do things such as walking, hiking, biking, or swimming to stay active during your camping trip. Be sure to bring protective gear, such as helmets, sturdy shoes, and life jackets. Avoid poisonous plants, like poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. Never hike or swim alone. Watch kids closely.

### Protect against carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless and can cause illness or death in people and pets. Never use fuel-burning equipment such as gas stoves, heaters, lanterns, and charcoal grills inside a tent, camper, or other enclosed shelter. It can cause dangerous levels of carbon monoxide to build up.

## Lesson Learned

A Sailor was climbing a tree on the beach with a butcher's knife in her mouth. (*In what universe did this sound like a good idea?!*). Given that we are telling the story here, yes, the Sailor fell out of the tree. When she landed in the sand, "the knife fell from her mouth and landed (*stuck*) in her right leg just above the knee." She was taken to the emergency room where she received several stitches, and was assigned 24 hours SIQ and eight days on light duty. — *The report doesn't say whether she was auditioning for the next season of Survivor, but we're pretty sure she didn't make the "cut" if she was (see what we did there?). You can add "butcher's knives and tree climbing don't mix" to the list of things we never thought we'd have to say. Sigh.*

### Avoid wild animals.

Some wild animals carry diseases that are dangerous to people. Avoid touching, feeding, and getting near wild animals. Enjoy watching them from a safe distance in their natural surroundings. Keep foods stored in sealed containers and out of the reach of animals.

### Fight the bug bite.

Mosquitoes, ticks, and other insects can cause certain diseases. To help fight the bite, apply insect repellent containing DEET to exposed skin. Be sure to follow directions on



the package.

Check for ticks daily, and remove them promptly. Wear long sleeves, pants, and other light-colored clothing to help prevent and spot ticks more easily.

### Prevent temperature-related illness.

To help prevent hypothermia during cool nights, bring adequate bedding and clothing to stay warm. Use a plastic ground cloth under your tent to help keep you dry. To help prevent heat-related illness during hot days, drink plenty of alcohol-free and sugar-free fluids. Wear layers of light-weight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing. Rest often in shady areas. Protect yourself from too much sun.

### Be prepared.

Always prepare for the unexpected. Before you leave, check the weather report, and tell family and friends your plans. Know what to do when toilets are not available. Be sure to bring along a supply kit that includes a first-aid kit, compass or GPS, map, flashlight, blankets, batteries, food, water, clothes, and medications. Know who to contact at the camp to report issues that may come up. When you return home, check for ticks, skin rashes or sunburn, dehydration, and other problems.

## Visit these sites for more information

<https://jp.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services>

[mccsiwakuni.com/hiking-safety-tips](https://mccsiwakuni.com/hiking-safety-tips)

[cdc.gov/family/camping](https://cdc.gov/family/camping)

[fujisan-climb.jp/en](https://fujisan-climb.jp/en)

[hikesafe.com](https://hikesafe.com)



**Questions? Please contact the MCAS Iwakuni Station Safety Center**