

Trail Hiking Safety

As the weather warms up more and more people are taking advantage of our beautiful hiking trails within Fairfield Glade as well as Cumberland County and our Parks. We won't sugarcoat this. Hiking can be dangerous. Sprained ankles, bad cuts and bruises, serious falls, broken limbs and even death are possible on almost any trail, but the risk of serious injury can be minimized by following a few simple steps.

Know your Terrain! Before you hike somewhere, know what it will be like and do some research. Read a guidebook, check online, look at Topo maps and Google Satellite images, or download a hiking app such as Gaia GPS, Alltrails and many more; do whatever you can to understand what you will be dealing with. By researching your trail and the terrain you will be encountering, you will be able to bring the right clothes, hiking shoes, poles, amount of water and food and other miscellaneous gear. Always have a cell phone so you can call for help as well as a charger, if possible, and tweezers to remove ticks and thorns from clothing or skin. For trails in Fairfield Glade, go to <https://gladetrails.com>. You will find an updated list of trails, a map of the trail, the distance, rating, GPS coordinates, where to park and a description. For other trails in Cumberland County, go to <https://crossvilletrails.com> for a list of hiking groups in the Glade, trails in Crossville as well as Cumberland Mountain State Park.

Dress Properly! If you hike any of the popular trails in the region, you have seen your fair share of people wearing clothes that aren't the smartest for day hikes. Wear the right clothes and the right shoes and bring raingear with you at all times. Even if the forecast calls for no rain over the next five days, always be prepared. If possible, bring hiking poles or sticks. A simple rule is that if you are wearing something you usually wear to work out in the gym while on a hike, you are underprepared. Remember to dress in layers so you have clothes to remove when you get too hot.

Leave a note of where you are going! Never go hiking without telling at least 2 other people where you are going and when you expect to return. This is one of the simplest ways to stay safe and get rescued, should you become stranded.

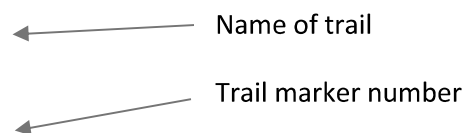
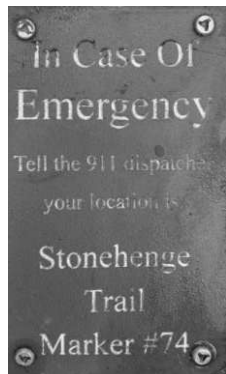
Know your limits and abilities! You, more than anyone else, know what your body is capable of doing while hiking. The worst thing you can do is to push yourself too hard and get stuck, unable to hike up or down. Do not feel like you have to keep up with someone hiking faster than you, as they are hiking at their pace and not yours. As soon as you feel out of your comfort zone, take a break, eat some protein, and drink some water and rest. If you still feel fatigued after a break of 5 or 10 minutes with zero improvement of your health and well-being, rest a bit more and call it a day. You are hiking for your enjoyment, not to keep up with everyone else.

Stay hydrated! The absolute worst thing you can do while hiking is to not stay properly hydrated and fed. Depending on the hike, you can lose anywhere between 2,000 and 6,000

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calories to reach your destination. Those calories need to be replenished, or you will start seeing an increase in cramping, loss of high-level cognitive abilities, dizziness and severe lethargy. Hiking is not the time to skip a meal or hold steady to your diet. Eat while on the trails and diet while at home. More common than not eating is not bringing water with you. It is recommended adding electrolytes to your water for longer or strenuous hikes in hot water. Some people carry Salt Sticks with them in case of excessive sweating.

Stay on the trail! Staying on the trail should always be done, not just for your safety, but for minimizing humanity's impact on the fragile natural areas we all enjoy so much. Numerous injuries occur each day on trails around the country from people leaving the trail for a better picture or to make the trip more fun. Injuries also occur off trail by hikers who get lost on the trail, which is something studying the terrain and trails can help alleviate. By staying on the trail, you are keeping yourself in a well-known area, so if an accident were to occur, search and rescue could easily reach you and transport you to safety. Leaving the trail on a hike should only be done for two reasons: to use the bathroom or to avoid an aggressive animal. If you end up in trouble or hurt on most Fairfield Glade trails and many Crossville trails, there are 911 signs with the **name of the trail** and the **marker number**. When you call 911, give them that information so emergency personnel can find you. These red signs can be found screwed into wooden footbridges or posts along the trail.



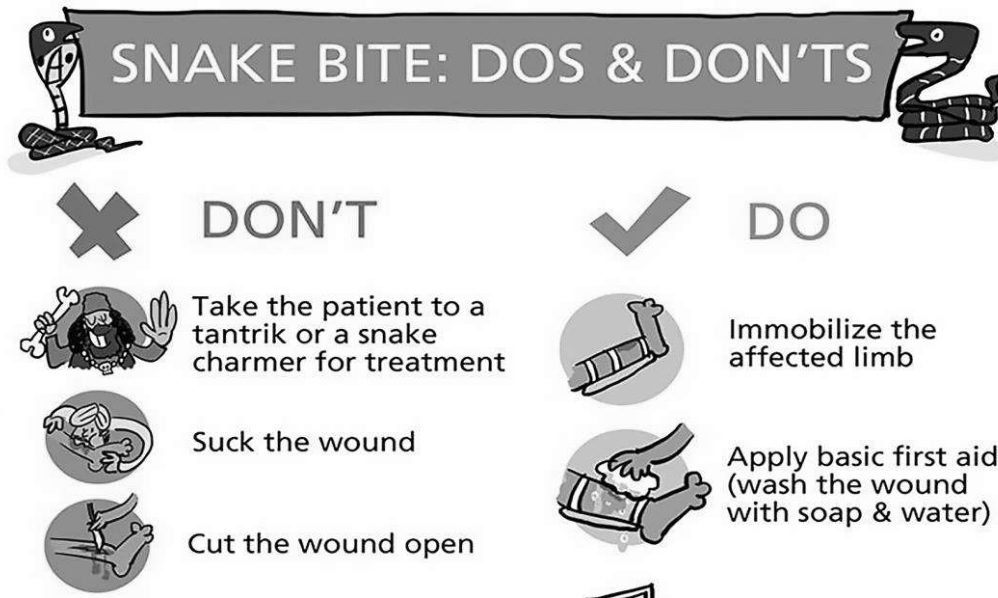
Bug Spray and Repellents – Keep ticks and bugs away and reduce the problems associated with Deer Ticks, rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Alpha Gall to name a few. Apply insecticide permethrin to gear and clothing. Use repellent spray on skin not covered by clothing. Wear light colors and cover as much skin as possible with long sleeves and pants.

First Aid Kit – Keep this with you to deal with scrapes, blisters and burns. Your kit should include materials such as bandages and band-aids, disinfectant, moleskin, athletic tape, pain relievers and scissors.

Sun Protection – Wear sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses to protect yourself from the sun.

Leave no Trace – This means to pack out all trash including biodegradable materials and avoid disturbing plants or wildlife.

Snakes and Bites – there are two types in venomous snakes in our area, Copperheads and Timber Rattlers. The third type of venomous snake, the Cottonmouth or Water Moccasins is found mostly in Western TN. In case of a snake bite, do some basic first aid. Try to identify the snake to determine if it is poisonous. Take a picture of it if it is possible to do so safely. Get emergency treatment for poisonous bites. If it is non-poisonous do normal snake wound treatment. Just clean it and bandage it. According to the Mayo Clinic, keep the person calm and still, wash the area with soap and water, remove tight clothing/jewelry, and keep the limb below heart level. **Do not cut the bite, apply a tourniquet, or use ice.** Use pressure immobilization bandages for snake-prone areas.



Hiking With a Dog – If you plan on hiking with a dog, verify that the particular hike permits dogs on the trail and that you keep your dog on a leash. If possible, do some snake avoidance training with your dog beforehand. If your dog gets bitten by a poisonous snake, follow the suggestions outlined above and get your dog to an emergency vet with non-venom as soon as practicable. Here are three such places open with 24-hour a day service: [Copeland Veterinary Hospital](#) – 821 East 10 Street, Cookeville, TN 38501 931-528-1111

[VCA Chattanooga](#) – 2132 Amnicola Hwy, Chattanooga, TN 37406 423-668-0051

[Animal Emergency and Specialty Services](#) – 10213 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37922



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Encountering a bear! Although not likely in Fairfield Glade or Crossville, there is always the possibility of encountering a bear. When hiking, make noise since bears will stay away from you if they hear people coming. Some people like to have a whistle. If you come across a bear, stand and face the bear. Identify yourself in a calm, appealing tone. Make yourself look as big as possible by spreading your arms slowly. Make as much noise as possible. Back away slowly, preferably in the direction you came. **Walk, don't run** and keep your eye on the bear so you can see how it will react. Never get between a bear and her cubs.

"KEEP SAFE BY BEING PREPARED"

Revised March 2026