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## Be Bear Smart

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In the fall, bears go into hibernation. When bears hibernate, they sleep in their dens. They do not eat or drink. Bears lose a lot of weight when they hibernate. So, they spend the summer eating.



Bears can smell the food humans leave in garbage cans.

### Why do bears like garbage?

Most human food is calorie-dense. This means that a bear needs to eat only a little to get a lot of energy.

Bears can smell the food humans leave in garbage cans or compost bins. They can also smell the food humans leave for other animals, like birdseed. When humans go camping, bears are attracted to the smell of cooking.

A bear's hunger is stronger than its fear of humans. So, bears will come close to homes and campsites.

If it's easy for a bear to get food, it will come back again. A bear looking for food might scare or hurt people.

### How can I keep bears away?

1. Keep garbage and compost bins indoors until collection day. If they must be kept outdoors, make sure the bins are properly closed.
2. Cover the food in your compost with leaves or grass clippings.
3. Pick up any ripe fruit or vegetables from your garden.
4. Don't leave pet food or birdseed outside.
5. Clean barbecues and cooking tools often.
6. Wash plates when you are camping. Dispose of food scraps properly. Keep uneaten food locked away.

### Did you know?

Many cities have bylaws about bear safety. If you do not protect your garbage and food from bears, you could be fined. Check your city's website for more information.

### Did you know?

Food that attracts bears is called an attractant.

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### What should I do if I see a bear?

If you see a bear, stay calm. Give the bear a lot of space. Back away slowly. Do not run away or stare at the bear. This might frighten it. A bear that is afraid could attack.

**Adapted from BCSPCA • Photo: Pixabay**