



# Camper Guide

## August 2023



## A LETTER TO CAMPERS AND FAMILIES

Dear Camper,

Welcome to Camp Ontario, a place where you don't have to explain what it's like to live with arthritis. Where everyone understands. And where you will have the opportunity to meet new friends, take your medicine in a supportive environment, sing songs and dance around the campfire, and have the best week ever!

Arthritis Society Canada believes that every child and youth living with arthritis in Canada deserves to experience the unforgettable experiences summer camp has to offer. Camp Ontario is all about having the time of your life, for one whole week, just being a kid at camp.

We are thrilled you have joined our Camp family!

Sincerely,

Arthritis Society

### FOR FAMILIES:

This Camp Guide is designed to provide general knowledge of the Camp Ontario experience, such as policies, camper care, and much more. The intent of this guide is to offer a clear picture of what to expect at camp.

Please note: It is perfectly normal for you and your camper to feel anxious and nervous about attending camp. We hope that this guide will ease any feelings of worry.

If you have any questions or concerns after reading through the following information, please do not hesitate to contact our Lauren Handler at [camp@arthritis.ca](mailto:camp@arthritis.ca).

**WE CAN'T WAIT  
TO MEET YOU!**



# ABOUT CAMP ONTARIO

## OUR HISTORY

Beginning in 2016 at Camp Maple Leaf (our previous host camp), 100 Ontario children and teens living with arthritis experienced the fun and excitement of summer camp! That year, our campers enjoyed an exciting program that included archery, swimming, arts and crafts, a rock wall and yoga.

In 2017, we moved to Camp Kodiak (another previous host camp) just north of Parry Sound in the heart of Ontario cottage country. In this second year, we welcomed 134 campers between the ages of 8-17 years old. With larger and more modern facilities available to us, we were able to welcome many more campers.

In 2022, Camp Ontario moved once again to Camp Tamakwa, in the beautiful Algonquin Park. Camp Tamakwa's, where we have the capacity to welcome 130 new and returning campers. With an outstanding roster of camp activities that include waterskiing, fishing, paddle boarding, canoeing, kayaking, zip-lining and campfire singalongs a so much more, we know that this will be another summer to remember!

Camp Ontario is all about campers having the time of their lives and, for 5 exciting days, just being a kid at camp.

## WHY CAMP ONTARIO?

From the beginning, the focus of Camp Ontario has been to provide a place where children with arthritis can come together and participate in fun, barrier-free activities in an environment where their medical and social needs can be supported.

Our campers get the chance to meet and interact with other children and volunteers living with arthritis. They are given an opportunity to increase their independence, learn new things, engage in social activities and meet new friends. In addition to a wide range of crafts, sports and water activities, the camp also offers educational programming to help children learn to manage their arthritis more effectively.

An on-site medical facility is open 24 hours a day, with 3-4 registered nurses and one social worker and one occupational therapist ensuring that campers' treatment programs can continue without interruption.

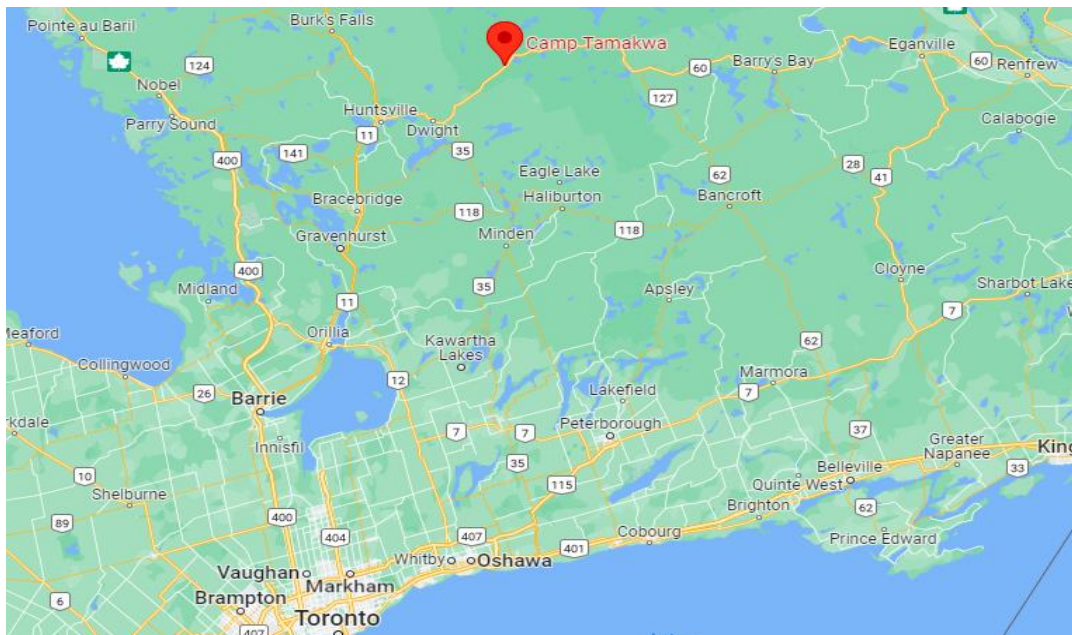
Our campers come from across Ontario, from Windsor to Ottawa to Hamilton. The campers at Camp Ontario vary in age from 8 to 17. With a mixture of new and returning campers, Camp Ontario promises a life-time of memories and lifelong friendships!



# LOCATION

Camp Ontario is hosted at Camp Tamakwa, in the scenic Algonquin Park. Founded in 1936 Camp Tamakwa is a playground of endless forests and crystal-clear lakes. A place with countless outdoor activities, a community of soon-to-be lifelong friends and a place where kids are encouraged to learn, play and grow.

For one week this summer, Camp Tamakwa offers its space to Arthritis Society Canada and Camp Ontario to put on an amazing week of camp for kids with arthritis.



**Camp Tamakwa in Algonquin Park, ON POA 1B0**



## Activities Offered include:

- Archery
- High Ropes
- Stand-Up Paddle Boarding
- Canoeing
- Sailing
- Land Sports
- Zip Line
- Kayaking
- Arts and Crafts
- Climb Wall
- Camp Fires
- Improv/Drama
- And more!

# ABOUT OUR VOLUNTEERS

## PROGRAM STAFF / CAMP VOLUNTEERS

The heart of the camp – that’s the best way to describe our wonderful volunteers. Every year, Arthritis Society Canada recruits, screens and trains volunteers from all over Ontario to create a magical week for our campers.

Arthritis Society Canada aims to create a safe and healthy experience for each camper and volunteer. We have designed mandatory training to ensure all volunteers feel comfortable in their positions at camp. This includes training from rheumatologists, social workers and occupational therapists on what it is like to live with childhood arthritis. Many of our volunteers live with arthritis and create endless opportunities for campers to learn and relate to others living with arthritis.



Our elective activities are run by Camp Tamakwa employees. These staff members go through an intensive training period, led by Camp Tamakwa at the start of their camp season, and all have the required certifications to lead our various electives, including lifeguarding, swimming instruction, boat-driving (pleasure craft operator), among others.



# CAMPER EXPERIENCE

## CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT

All campers will arrive at Camp Ontario on Sunday, August 20 and depart on Thursday August 24.

Arthritis Society Canada provides bus transportation to and from Camp Ontario from four cities:

- ✓ Toronto
- ✓ Ottawa
- ✓ London
- ✓ Hamilton

We strongly encourage all families to opt into bus transportation. The road to the Camp Ontario's boat access site is one-way and there is limited parking on site. If bus transportation is not a viable option for you, contact [camp@arthritis.ca](mailto:camp@arthritis.ca), you can opt to drive your camper instead.

***Please note: Changes to Drop Off and Pick Up locations cannot be made after August 1, 2023***

## Head Lice and Communicable Disease

Head lice and communicable disease are a common occurrence among children and spread rapidly. For this reason, we have a proactive head lice and communicable disease management protocol in place to prevent outbreaks. Please check your child for lice or nits before arriving to camp. Any child with lice, nits or a communicable disease will not be able to attend camp.

More details on bus transportation and the arrival and departure processes will be provided by email in July / August 2023.



## A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP ONTARIO

Our goal is to provide a balance of group activities, education and independence building programs. Activities will vary daily and are subject to weather. We value the opportunity for children to connect with others living with arthritis and the opportunity for them to become leaders, advocates and champions

### Example Schedule

7:30am	Wake Up
8:00am	Breakfast (and Meds)
9:00am	Cabin Clean Up
10:00am	First Period
11:00am	Free Time and Rest Period
12:00pm	Lunch (and Meds)
1:00pm	All Camp Swim
2:00pm	Snack and Rest Period
3:00pm	Second Period
4:15pm	Free Time and Rest Period
5:15pm	Dinner (and Meds)
6:45pm	Evening Programming
8:15pm	Snack / Medication
9:00pm	Younger Camper's Bedtime
10:30pm	Older Camper's Bedtime

**Each camper will take part in a lifeguard supervised swim test on August 20.**



## PACKING FOR CAMP

Please limit your child's luggage to one carry-on, and two soft duffle bags

### Bedding, towels and toiletries

- 1 flat and 1 fitted twin sheet set with warm blanket/comforter (single or cot size) or 1 fitted twin sheet with sleeping bag
- 1 pillow
- 2 towels (shower/swimming)
- 1 bottle shampoo
- 1 bottle conditioner
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 tube of toothpaste
- 1 toiletry bag or bucket
- 1 hair brush or comb
- 1 deodorant
- 1 bottle sunscreen (30 SPF minimum)
- 1 lip balm with sunscreen (30 SPF minimum)
- 1 bottle insect repellent (non-aerosol)
- 1 box Kleenex
- Box feminine hygiene product (if applicable)
- Large laundry bag
- Reusable water bottle

### Clothing

- 5 short sleeved shirts or t-shirts
- 1 nice outfit for dance (dress up)
- 2 sweatshirts or long-sleeved shirts warm jacket or fleece
- Sunglasses
- 1 flashlight
- 1 raincoat or poncho

- 3 pairs of pants
- 3 pairs of shorts
- 6 pairs of underwear
- 6 pairs of socks
- 2 bathing suits (camp appropriate)
- 2 pairs of pajamas
- 1 sun or baseball hat
- 1 pair closed toed shoes
- 1 pair rain boots

### Optional Items

- Games (e.g. cards – nothing electronic)
- Reading material (books, comics)
- Baseball glove
- Battery-operated fan
- 1 stuffed animal
- Disposable camera
- Bathrobe
- Mask
- Hand Sanitizer

### Do Not Bring

Items such as cash, candy, food, gum, pets, cell phones, iPods, stereos, MP3 players, electronic games, good jewelry or any other irreplaceable items should NOT be brought to camp.

Prohibited items include, but aren't limited to, explosives, knives, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

Cost to replace and/or repair equipment or property destroyed will not be assumed by Arthritis Society Canada but by the parent or guardian of the child responsible.



# CAMP POLICIES

## MEDICAL CARE

Our medical staff team consists of 4-6 registered nurses, one occupational therapist and one registered social services worker. These professionals are available 24 hours a day to care for the campers and staff and are an essential component of the Camp Ontario family. All medications are kept and administered by the camp nursing team. No medications are permitted in the cabins. All medication times are accommodated at camp. Whether your camper is newly diagnosed or is approaching adulthood, our medical staff team work tirelessly to ensure your camper will get the most out of the camp experience.

Camp Ontario is staffed with registered healthcare professionals 24 hours a day. The camp medical team is responsible for overseeing the total health care of the camp. In the event of an injury or illness that needs further attention, the camper will be taken to a local hospital. The camp medical team will make recommendations to send campers home, if necessary.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF CAMPERS

Our medical team is on site to help manage your child's health and well-being throughout their time at camp. Any emotional, behavioral or medical issues that arise will be managed by the at-camp social worker(s) / social services worker(s), medical team, and camp director. If your child needs to be sent home due to safety, behavioral or health concerns, you will be contacted to come pick up your child. Arthritis Society Canada cannot provide transportation home. If a child or teen experiences suicidal ideation or self-harm behaviours, parents or guardians will be contacted to

immediately pick up the camper to ensure their safety.

## MEDICINE AND TREATMENT

**Medications, including prescription and non-prescription drugs, must be in blister packages (highly recommended). Non-blister packs, original container(s) with the pharmacy label on it will only be accepted for campers on one or PRN medication(s). Please only provide the proper dosage for the duration of the camp program.** All medications will be collected at the bus site at the time of check in or at camp upon arrival by Arthritis Society volunteers. Please do NOT pack medication in camper's luggage.

It is imperative that any updates, from the time of registration to your camper's medications, doses, administration time, are communicated with us prior to camp. Please contact [camp@arthritis.ca](mailto:camp@arthritis.ca) to report any medication adjustments. This is a non-negotiable request. All parents/guardians are required to verify that their camper's medications are up-to-date at registration at drop off.

**A friendly reminder:** If the child carries their own medication (eg. Puffer, Epi-Pen) a note from a legally-qualified medical practitioner or a nurse registered under the Health Disciplines Act should indicate that the child may carry and administer their own medication. A copy of the doctor's note must be provided at Registration to be kept on file. Each medication requires a separate medication form (e.g. 2 Puffers require 2 forms).

## HOMESICK CAMPERS

Our counselors are trained to recognize the symptoms associated with homesick campers. Efforts will be made to console campers and assist them in developing coping strategies. The following guidelines will be used to address homesick campers:

- Encouraged not to call home until 48 hours have passed
- If a camper is still homesick after two nights and reasonable efforts by camp staff have been exhausted, parents may be contacted to pick up their camper.

Arthritis Society Canada does not provide transportation home for homesick campers.

## FOOD SERVICES

Balanced meals are prepared and served by the food service staff for each meal. If your child has any special dietary needs that were indicated on their registration forms, these needs will be met at camp. **If a camper refuses to eat for an extended period of time, the camper will, unfortunately, be required to leave camp in order to ensure their health and safety.**

## CABIN LIFE

Cabin groups are arranged by age/grade/gender. We do our best to ensure all cabin-mates are within one year



or grade of each other. Your camper is expected to maintain an acceptable level of manners, behaviour and attitude in their group to create a positive living environment.

## OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

Campers are expected to participate in assigned activities, adhere to lights out/curfew and respect others. **Failure to comply will result in dismissal from camp.**

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

There will be no possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, illegal drugs or weapons before, during or after the camp experience while on camp grounds. **Failure to comply will result in dismissal from camp.**

## VISITORS OR PHONE CALLS

Once your child arrives at camp, they will begin the experience of making new friendships and participating in camp activities. Since the camp program is only a short time, we want your child to take advantage of every moment. Visits or phone calls from family members will take away from that experience and possibly lead to homesickness. If we need to speak with you during the camp program, we will contact you immediately.

## HARASSMENT

As outlined in the Camper Code of Conduct that was signed during your registration process, all camp participants will refrain from any bullying, hazing, harassment or similar behavior. **Failure to comply will result in dismissal from camp.**

## LOST AND FOUND

Unclaimed items will be kept at Arthritis Society Canada national office in Toronto until one month past the end of the camp program. The items are then donated to charity.

## BULLYING AT CAMP ONTARIO



At Camp Ontario, bullying is inexcusable, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying.

Our Camp philosophy is based on our mission statement to ensure that every camper has the opportunity to build friendships with peers who experience the same health challenges, learn about their disease, and discuss coping skills, enhance their self-confidence, gain a sense of independence, and have a TON of

fun! We work as a team to ensure that campers gain self-confidence, make new friends, and go home with great memories. Unfortunately, bullying takes away from the camp experience.

Our leadership addresses all incidents of bullying seriously. Staff are trained to promote open communication with their volunteers and their campers so they feel comfortable alerting us to any problems during their camp experience and between camp seasons. If a camper bullies another camper, they will be asked to stop, and provided strategies to change their behaviour. If their behaviour does not change, Arthritis Society Canada may ask the camper to leave the program. If this occurs, parents/guardians are responsible for picking up their camper from Camp Ontario.

## SUN AT CAMP

At Camp Ontario, the safety of our campers is our first priority. As part of its ongoing risk management program, Camp Ontario has a sun safety policy to help protect our campers while enjoying time outside.

We encourage parents to talk to campers about the risks of overexposure to sun and the importance of wearing sunscreen, hats and sunglasses.

Our volunteers will participate in training regarding sun safety before campers arrive. Campers will be expected to wear hats, apply sunscreen and drink water every day.

Sunscreen (SPF 30) will be available in each cabin and each camper will be reminded to reapply throughout the day.



## UNPLUG AT CAMP

We have a strict “no cell phone” policy at Camp Ontario. This includes electronic devices with the capability to play games, videos, and/or connect to the internet, which are not permitted to camp even if these features are disabled.

Aside from the fact that cell phones are expensive and can get lost, or that the physical camp environment is not kind to such items, these items discourage the positive interactions in the bunk that are a big part of the camp experience. The “downtimes” at camp are a great opportunity for campers to shape the strong bonds and share their experience living with arthritis. Campers who are “tuned out” are missing out on this. Your understanding and support of this policy helps us ensure campers have an engaging summer camp experience. As such, we request that all cell phones stay at home. If your camper decides to bring their cell phone camp, it will be held in the camp office for the duration of the camp.

While we discourage the use of cell phones at camp, small, lightweight and inexpensive digital cameras are allowed, along with their chargers and preferably waterproof cases. Cameras that are large, bulky or with removable lenses are strongly discouraged.

Camp Ontario is not responsible for damage or loss of electronic devices or cameras at camp.

## WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP

The following items are not allowed at camp:

- ✓ Alcohol, drugs not prescribed to the camper, tobacco products, cannabis
- ✓ Knives, including camping or Swiss army knives
- ✓ Valuable or previous items
- ✓ Matches or lighters
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Non-medical electronic devices, with the exception of digital cameras.

## CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Camper Code of Conduct is our guide to ensure the enjoyment and safety of all campers! This document should be read and signed by both parent/guardian and camper during the registration process. This document is MANDATORY, and it details specific behavioural expectations required to attend camp, including a list of our summer camp rules and disciplinary procedures. This guide ensures each camper has a fun, exciting and safe week at Camp Ontario! This form was completed during registration.

## ACTIVITY RELEASE AND CONSENT AGREEMENT

In order to attend Camp Ontario, it is mandatory for each camper family to sign the following documents:

- ✓ Arthritis Society’s Activity Release and Consent Agreement (completed with registration)
- ✓ Camp Tamakwa’s Waiver and Release Form

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## RESOURCES AND EVENTS

### Backpack Program

Arthritis Society Canada's Childhood Arthritis Backpack Program helps kids be kids. Launched in March 2013, the program delivers a backpack filled with information and tools to families of schoolchildren who have arthritis, helping them lead healthier, more fulfilling lives. Visit [arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis](http://arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis) for more information on our Backpack Program.

### Arthritis Rehabilitation and Education Program

Arthritis Society Canada provides a range of services for children and adults living with arthritis in Ontario through the Arthritis Education and Rehabilitation Program (AREP). Services include:

- client-centered rehabilitation services (occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social work, etc.)
- consultation and guidance on arthritis self-management in the home, workplace and community
- individual and group education sessions

In an individual appointment, you will develop a plan with your clinician which may include:

- Education and support
- Improved pain control, stiffness, mobility
- Improved strength, endurance and energy
- Gait (walking) and mobility issues
- Functional problems limiting activities of daily living or leisure

- Adapting the home or workplace, splints, mobility devices or equipment to improve function
- Links to other health or community resources

Visit [arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community](http://arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community) for more information on our Arthritis Rehabilitation and Education Program.

### Club Sunrise

Club Sunrise is an online community where children with arthritis and other rheumatic diseases come together in various fun, engaging activities throughout the year to help them connect with children (5-17) facing similar circumstances.

After registering for this free program (via our website!) you will be invited to a series of fun and interactive monthly sessions taking place over Zoom. At Club sunrise you will be understood and accepted. We will celebrate you, challenge you, and connect you with a supportive community.

### Volunteer

Arthritis Society Canada offers many opportunities to volunteer. Visit [arthritis.ca/get-involved/volunteer](http://arthritis.ca/get-involved/volunteer) to learn more about our volunteer opportunities. We are also looking for volunteers to support bus registration this summer. If you or anyone you know is interested please contact [camp@arthritis.ca](mailto:camp@arthritis.ca).

# We can't wait to see you at Camp Ontario in 2023!



Questions? Please feel free to contact:

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Arthritis Society Canada

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