

Bugs and Bug Spray Safety

Due to the risk of infections carried by bugs that bite, it is important to use bug spray when outside.

How does repellent bug spray work?

- Biting insects can detect chemicals given off by the skin and breath of animals and humans.
- The dangers of bug bites and stings include allergic reactions, lyme disease, west nile virus, and skin infection.

How can I avoid bug bites?

- Avoid peak mosquito hours (dusk until dawn).
- Don't use perfumes, scented soaps, or hair sprays.
- Avoid areas with larger areas of mosquitoes. Stay away from standing water, such as birdbaths, ponds, pails of water, etc.
- Avoid areas near uncovered food.
- Stay out of gardens where flowers are blooming.
- Avoid brightly colored clothing or clothing with flowery prints.
- Install and repair screens on windows and doors.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants. Tuck pant legs into socks/boots.
- Always do a full body check for ticks after going inside.
- Put an insect repellent on skin, clothing, shoes, and/or strollers.

What kind of bug spray should I buy?

- Until recently, the active ingredient in most bug sprays has been DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide). Lately, other ingredients such as Picaridin, have been used instead of DEET in insect repellents.
- DEET is thought to be the most effective ingredient in insect repellents. However, other ingredients have been shown to be as effective in certain trials.
- Larger amounts of DEET in insect repellents increase the length of protection from bugs, not the effectiveness of the repellent.
- Children between 2 months of age and one year may safely use products containing 7.5% DEET or less. Those older than one year of age may use up to 15% DEET on their skin. Products with up to 30% DEET can be put on strollers, clothes, and shoes but not directly on the skin. (DEET can damage some surfaces such as spandex, rayon, acetate, pigmented leather, plastic, and vinyl).

Buying bug spray (continued)

- DEET should not be used on children under two months of age. Strollers can be sprayed before use and mosquito netting can be used over carriers or strollers. Products containing Picaridin should not be used on children less than two years of age. Products with oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children younger than three years of age. Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations regarding insect repellents with other active ingredients.
- Permethrin is a special type of insect repellent which should only be used on clothing. It should **not** be used directly on skin.

Insect Repellent Product Information

Active Ingredient	Brand Names with strength of active ingredient	Length of Protection ¹
DEET <7.5%	OFF [®] Skintastic, OFF Family Care Wipes, OFF Skintastic For Kids [®]	1.5 – 2 hours
DEET 7.5-15%	Cutter [®] Wipes, Cutter Family Skinations [®]	2 hours
DEET >15%	Repel [®] 100% Deet, Ben's [®] Tick and Insect Repellent, Repel Sportsman's Max, Ultrathon Insect Repellent, Cutter Backwoods, Repel Sportsman, Ben's Tick and Insect Repellent Wilderness, Sawyer [®] Insect Repellent, OFF [®] Active, OFF Deep Woods, Repel Family, Sawyer Controlled Release	4 – 12 hours
Picaridin	Cutter Advances Sport, OFF Skintastic Clean Feel, Cutter Advanced	4 – 8 hours
IR3535	Skin-So-Soft [®] Bug Guard Plus	23 minutes
Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus	Repel Lemon Eucalyptus	2 – 6 hours
Soybean Oil	Bite Blocker [®] , Buzz Away [™] Extreme, Jason [®] Quit Bugging Me, Bite Blocker Repellent Herbal Wipes	1.5 – 8 hours
BioUD	Bite Blocker Bio US	4.5 hours
Citronella	Burt's Bees [®] Insect Repellent*, Natrapel [®] Plus, Badger [®] Anti-Bug Balm, All Terrain Herbal Armor ^{™**} , Green Ban for People ^{***} , Buzz Away, Skin-So-Soft Moisturizing Suncare.	

¹ Length of protection depends on the concentration of the active ingredients. Refer to the manufacturer's label to get a specific length of protection.

* Also contains rosemary and lemongrass oils.

** Also contains peppermint, cedar, lemongrass and geranium oils.

*** Also contains peppermint oil.

How do I use bug spray safely?

- Read labels carefully and keep sprays in a safe place.
- Choose a lotion or a pump spray product. Avoid aerosol sprays as they increase the risk of inhaling chemicals during the application.
- Parents should apply the lotion or pump-spray repellent onto their hands first and then spread it on the child's uncovered skin. Be careful not to use too much. Heavy amounts are not needed for the bug spray to work well.
- Put on children's clothes, shoes, socks, and strollers.
- Parents, be sure to wash your hands after applying insect repellent.
- Wash bug spray off with soap and water after going inside.
- Apply once daily.
- Avoid areas around eyes and mouth.
- Do not use a product containing both bug spray and sunscreen. Sunscreen needs to be reapplied often. Bug spray should be put on only once a day.
- Wash all treated clothing.

Do not:

- Use under clothing.
- Spray repellent in enclosed areas or near food.
- Use on young children's hands.
- Put on irritated skin, cuts or wounds.

How should I treat mosquito bites?

- Avoid scratching.
- Use an anti-itch product if needed.

Anti-Itch Product Information

- Eucerin anti-itch spray
- Sarna anti-itch lotion
- 1% Hydrocortisone cream twice daily
- Prax
- Pramoxine (Prescription only)
- Itch X
- Aveeno Anti-Itch

Active Ingredient

- Menthol
- Camphor and Menthol
- Hydrocortisone
- Pramoxine
- Pramoxine with Hydrocortisone 1%
- Pramoxine and Benzoyl Alcohol
- Pramoxine, Camphor, and Calamine

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.