

## **Bugs and Insect Repellent Safety**

Some bugs that bite carry infections. The dangers of bug bites and stings include allergic reactions, lyme disease, west nile virus, and skin infection.

It is important to use insect repellent when outside to keep from getting bit. Repellents work on biting insects like mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks. **They do not repel stinging insects like bees and hornets.**

### **How can I avoid bug bites?**

- Avoid being outside from dusk until dawn. These are peak mosquito hours.
- Avoid areas with large areas of mosquitoes. Stay away from:
  - Standing water. This includes birdbaths, ponds, pails of water, etc.
  - Wooded and brushy areas with tall grass.
  - Gardens where flowers are blooming.
  - Areas near uncovered food. When outdoors, be careful eating or drinking uncovered foods or beverages. These things can attract insects.
- Don't use perfumes, scented soaps, or hair sprays.
- Avoid bright colored clothing or clothes with flowery prints.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots. Do not go barefoot. Wear closed-toe shoes when walking in grassy areas.
- Put an insect repellent on skin, clothes, and shoes.
- Always do a full body check for ticks after going inside.

### **What kind of insect repellent should I buy?**

- Choose a lotion or a pump spray instead of an aerosol.
- It is best to use a product that is recommended by the EPA.
- See the manufacturer's recommendations for insect repellents with other active ingredients.
- How well and how long repellents protect varies among products and insect species.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends using a product with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, Picaridin, Lemon Eucalyptus (PMD) for skin and clothing. DEET works very well, but it is important that it is used correctly.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that:
  - DEET not be used on children younger than 2 months of age.
  - Repellents used on children contain no more than 30% DEET. Higher percentages of DEET increase the length of protection. It does not make it work better.

- Lotions that combine DEET and sunscreen are not a good idea. Sunscreen needs to be reapplied every few hours. If you use a combination product, it may overexpose your child to DEET. Apply each product separately. **Always** follow the directions on the label.
- DEET was the most active ingredient in most insect repellents for a long time. Now, other ingredients such as Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and other natural repellents have been shown to be effective in insect repellents.
  - **Picaridin** is a non-toxic, colorless, odorless synthetic ingredient found in some bug repellents. It works much like DEET to give long-lasting protection against mosquitoes and ticks. Products with Picaridin can be used on babies as young as 2 months.
  - **Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE or PMD)** is a natural oil. It works well to protect against mosquitoes, but not ticks. **It is not recommended for use in children less than 3 years old.**

### How do I use insect repellent safely?

Once you've chosen a bug repellent, it's important that you use it properly in order for it to be safe. Here are some tips:

- Read labels carefully. Follow the instructions for putting on the repellent.
- If you use an aerosol spray, be careful not to inhale the spray while putting it on.
- Apply repellent outside only and never near food.
- Apply product only to exposed skin. Avoid hands, eyes, mouth, cuts, or irritations.
- Children under 10 should not apply bug repellent themselves.
- Put it on your hands first, then rub it on your child so you don't use too much.
- Do not use too much. Heavy amounts are not needed for it to work well.
- Wash your hands after putting on insect repellent.
- Wash insect repellent off with soap and water after going inside.
- Wash all treated clothing before wearing again.
- Always follow the instructions for application.

### How should I treat mosquito bites?

- Do not scratch the bites.
- Use an anti-itch product if needed.

#### Anti-Itch Product Information

#### Active Ingredient

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eucerin anti-itch spray</li> <li>• Sarna anti-itch lotion</li> <li>• 1% Hydrocortisone cream twice daily</li> <li>• Prax</li> <li>• Pramoxone (Prescription only)</li> <li>• Itch X</li> <li>• Aveeno Anti-Itch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menthol</li> <li>• Camphor and Menthol</li> <li>• Hydrocortisone</li> <li>• Pramoxine</li> <li>• Pramoxine with Hydrocortisone 1%</li> <li>• Pramoxine and Benzoyl Alcohol</li> <li>• Pramoxine, Camphor, and Calamine</li> </ul>
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**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 help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**