

FAQS: MOSQUITO REPELLENTS

Why should I use mosquito repellents?

Insect repellents can help reduce exposure to mosquito bites that may carry viruses such as West Nile virus. These viruses may cause serious illness and even death. Using insect repellent allows you to continue to work and play outdoors with a reduced risk of mosquito bites.

When should I use mosquito repellent?

Apply repellent when you are going to be outdoors. Even if you don't notice mosquitoes, there is a good chance they are around. Many of the mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus bite between dusk and dawn. It is especially important to apply repellent if you are outdoors during these times. In wet, wooded areas there are mosquitoes that also bite during the day, and some of these mosquitoes have also been found to carry West Nile virus or other diseases.

What guidelines are available for using a repellent on children?

- Always follow the recommendations appearing on the product label when using repellent.
- When using repellent on a child, apply it to your own hands and then rub them on your child. Avoid children's eyes and mouth and use it sparingly around their ears.
- Do not apply repellent to children's hands. (Children may tend to put their hands in their mouths).
- Do not allow young children to apply insect repellent to themselves; have an adult do it for them.
- Keep repellents out of reach of children.

How often should repellent be reapplied?

In general, you should re-apply repellent if you are being bitten by mosquitoes. Always follow the directions on the product you are using. Like sunscreen, repellents may be washed off by perspiration or swimming and this means that you may need to re-apply.

Repellents containing a higher concentration (higher percentage) of active ingredient typically provide longer-lasting protection.

Which mosquito repellents work best?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend using products shown to work in scientific trials and that contain active ingredients registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use as insect repellents on skin or clothing. Of the active ingredients registered with the EPA, CDC believes two have demonstrated a higher degree of effectiveness. These active ingredients are:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide)
- Picaridin (KBR 3023)

Oil of lemon eucalyptus [active ingredient: p-menthane 3,8-diol (PMD)], a plant-based repellent, is also registered with EPA. In two recent scientific publications, when this product was tested against mosquitoes found in the United States, it provided protection similar to repellents with low concentrations of DEET.