

Insect Repellents

A Friendly Parent Guide

- ★ Insect repellent is only protective against biting insects (mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, chiggers, biting flies, etc) and is NOT protective against stinging insects (bees, wasps, hornets).
- ★ The following ingredients have been scientifically tested and are safe for children when used correctly. Other ingredients used have not been tested for safety or effectiveness.
- ★ Don't be fooled by terms such as "natural" or "chemical free", although these sound kid friendly there is no regulation for using these phrases and could apply to anything.
- ★ **Read all instructions, precautions, and age restrictions before using any product on your child!**

CDC Approved Effective Repellent Ingredients:

- DEET
 - Considered the best defence against biting insects
 - About 2 to 5 hours of protection depending on the concentration
 - Caution should be used when applying DEET to children
 - Products with amounts of DEET greater than 30% don't offer any extra protection
- Picaridin
 - Repellents that are reported to work as well as DEET concentration of 10%
 - About 3 to 8 hours of protection depending on concentration
- Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD
 - Usually less than 2 hours of protection
 - Repellents that are reported to work as well as DEET concentration of 10%
 - Products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should NOT be used on children under the age of three
 - Allergic reactions are rare but can occur. If your child has a reaction immediately stop use and contact Poison Control (800-222-1222) and/or your child's doctor
- Para-menthane-diol
 - Naturally in the lemon eucalyptus plant and is extracted from the leaves and twigs to be refined into a repellent
 - Repellents that are reported to work as well as DEET concentration of 10%
- IR3535
- Repellents containing Permethrin
 - Insecticide and repellent
 - Kills and repels biting insects
 - Should be applied only to clothing
 - Lasts even after several washings
 - Can be applied to camping gear as well
 - Should NOT be applied directly to skin

Products that are NOT EFFECTIVE:

- Wristbands soaked in chemical repellent
- Garlic or vitamin B1 taken orally
- Ultrasonic devices that give off soundwaves designed to keep insects away

- Bird or bat houses
- Backyard bug zappers (insects may be attracted to your yard by these devices)

Tips for Using Repellents Safely with Children:

- Read the label and follow ALL directions
 - Investigate repellents further if necessary, most have websites that provide more information
- Only apply insect repellents on the outside of clothing and on exposed skin
- Spray repellents in open areas to avoid breathing them in
- Use just enough to cover clothing and exposed skin, using more doesn't make the repellent more effective
- Avoid reapplying until needed
- Help apply insect repellent to children
- Wash repellent off of children with soap and water when returning indoors
- Wash clothes sprayed with repellent before wearing them again
- NEVER apply insect repellent to children younger than 2 months
- NEVER spray insect repellents directly onto the face. Instead, spray repellent onto your hands and rub it onto your child's face. Avoid eyes and mouth.
- Do NOT spray insect repellent on cuts, wounds, or irritated skin
- Do NOT use products that combine DEET (or an repellent) with sunscreen
 - The DEET may make the sunscreen less effective (you may want to use a higher SPF when using repellent and sunscreen)
 - Sunscreen needs to be applied more often than insect repellent so there is a risk of overexposure
 - The CDC recommends you apply sunscreen and then repellent

REACTIONS TO INSECT REPELLENTS:

If you suspect your child is having a reaction, such as a rash, to an insect repellent stop using the product and wash skin with soap and water.

Call Poison Help 1-800-222-1222 and/or your child's doctor for assistance.

Other Ways to Protect Children from Insect Bites:

- Avoid areas that attract flying insects such as garbage cans, stagnant pools of water, and flowerbeds or orchards
- Dress your child in long pants and loose long sleeve shirts
 - A broad brimmed hat can also help keep insects away from the face
- Mosquito netting may be placed over baby carriages and strollers
- Avoid using strongly scented shampoos, soaps, and hair sprays on your child before outdoor play
- Keep door and window screens in good repair
- Perform daily tick checks!

Sources and other Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html>

<http://kidstravel.doc.com/an-update-applying-mosquito-repellents-to-young-children-is-no-fun-and-games-for-parent-or-child/>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Insect-Repellents.aspx>