



FAQ - Use of Mosquito Repellent on Children

Can insect repellents be used on children?

- Repellent products must state any age restriction. If there is none, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not required a restriction on the use of the product.
 - For example according to the label, picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus products should NOT be used on CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that repellents with DEET should not be used on infants less than 2 months old.

How should repellent be applied on children?

- Always follow the recommendations on the product label.
- Do not allow young children to apply insect repellent themselves; have an adult do it for them.
- 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 put their hands in their mouths.)
- Use enough repellent to cover exposed skin or clothing. Don't apply repellent to skin that is under clothing. Heavy application is not necessary to achieve protection.
- Do not apply repellent to cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- Do not spray aerosol or pump products in enclosed areas or around food.
- Keep repellents out of reach of children.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.
- If repellent is applied to clothing, wash treated clothing before wearing again. Check label for specific instructions.

What are additional ways that I can protect children from mosquito bites?

- The best way to prevent mosquito bites is to avoid being outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, this is especially important for babies for whom there are no recommended repellents.
- Children (and adults) can wear long pants and long sleeves while outdoors.
- Some repellents, such as permethrin, can also be applied to clothing. Check label directions.
- Mosquito netting can be used over infant carriers.
- Remove containers with standing water that provide breeding places for mosquitoes.

Can insect repellents be used by pregnant or nursing women?

EPA does not recommend any additional precautions for using approved repellents on pregnant or lactating women. Consult your health care provider if you have questions.

Can I use an insect repellent and a product containing sunscreen at the same time? What are the recommendations for combination sunscreen/insect repellent products?

People can, and should, use both a sunscreen and an insect repellent when they are outdoors. Follow the instructions on the package for proper application of each product. In general, the recommendation is to apply sunscreen first, followed by repellent.

It is recommended NOT to use a single product that combines insect repellent containing DEET and sunscreen, because the instructions for use of insect repellents and use of sunscreen are different. It is important to always follow the label on whatever product you are using.

How does the percentage of active ingredient in a product relate to the amount of protection it gives?

Typically, the higher the concentration of active ingredient a product contains (for example 30% versus 10%), the longer it provides protection from mosquito bites. The concentration affects how long the product works, not how well the product works. Choose a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors. A product with a higher concentration of active ingredient is a good choice if you will be outdoors for several hours, while a product with a lower concentration can be used if time outdoors will be limited. Simply re-apply the repellent (following label instructions) if you are outdoors for a longer time than expected. Reapply the repellent if it is washed off by sweating or getting wet.