

Mosquito Bite Protection

Mosquito bites cause discomfort, but they may also cause infections. Mosquitoes have been identified as the carriers of the West Nile Virus in North America. This disease was first reported in North America in 1999, and has since been identified across much of the continent.

Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. The Virus circulates in their blood, and finds its way into the mosquito's salivary glands. The virus may then be injected into humans and animals during subsequent blood meals. Take these precautions to reduce the risk of illness due to bites from infected mosquitoes:

- When possible, avoid areas with high mosquito populations, including woods and wetlands.
- Take extra care when spending time outdoors between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear light-coloured clothing, including long sleeved tops, long pants, socks and shoes.
- Install or repair window and door screens so that mosquitoes cannot get indoors.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET sparingly to clothing and exposed skin areas. Follow the recommendations by Health Canada and the Canadian Paediatric Society outlined in the table below:

Age	Applications Per Day	DEET Concentration	Comments
Under 6 months	0	0	DEET should not be used on infants under 6 months
6 months to 2 years	1	10% or less	Apply only if a high risk of infection exists
2 to 12 years	3 maximum	10% or less	Avoid face and hands
Over 12 years	As required	30% or less	Avoid face and hands

Information on Insect Repellents

DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) is the most effective and best-studied insect repellent available. Currently available non-DEET repellents do not provide prolonged, reliable protection where mosquito-borne diseases are a substantial threat.

Repellents that contain 30% DEET will provide adults with sufficient protection. Products with lower concentrations of DEET are equally effective in repelling mosquitoes, but last for a shorter period of time. Choose a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors.

Adverse reactions to repellents can be decreased by taking the following precautions:

- Avoid high concentrations of DEET.
- Do not inhale, ingest or get into the eye.
- Avoid applying to children's hands, because they are likely to have contact with the eyes or mouth.
- Never use on wounds or irritated skin.
- Wash repellent-treated skin and clothing after coming indoors.
- If using sunscreen, apply the sunscreen first to allow it to bind to the skin.

Adapted with permission from Lambton Health Unit