



Insect Repellents

Did you know?

Bites from ticks and mosquitoes can lead to serious illnesses, such as Lyme Disease and West Nile. Insect repellent ("bug spray") can be a safe and effective way to protect children from bug bites, but it is important to use it correctly to limit exposure to chemicals.

Action Plan

- **In areas high-risk for serious insect-borne illness:** Choose insect repellents containing 20 - 30% DEET (lasts 5 hours) or 20% picaridin (lasts 3 - 7 hours), oil of lemon eucalyptus (for children over 3), or another EPA-approved product.
- **Apply Repellent Safely:**
 - Apply outdoors and away from food. Apply directly onto clothes and exposed skin – do not apply under clothes.
 - For young children, spray into your hands, then rub on their skin.
 - Do not apply to eyes, mouth, open wounds, or children's hands.
 - Apply on top of sunscreen. Avoid combined sunscreen-repellent products because sunscreen has to be applied often. DEET should be applied just once a day.
 - Avoid products containing more than 30% DEET.
 - Keep products stored away from young children.
- **After Using Repellent:** Wash skin with soap and water. Launder clothes. In tick areas, check your child's skin closely from head-to-toe, even in hidden places like the scalp, armpits, and groin.
- **Wear Protective Clothing Outdoors:** Wear long-sleeved shirts and tuck pants into socks to prevent bug bites.
- **Newborns:** Do not use repellents on babies younger than 2 months. Use protective clothing or mosquito netting on strollers instead.

[more](#) →

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Resources

For information on pests and how to prevent certain bug bites:

- [cdc.gov/ncezid](https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid) and search "Prevent Tick and Mosquito Bites"
- nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you
- health.ny.gov and search "Insect Repellents and Pesticides"

While shopping, use these guides to help find the right insect repellent for you:

- [epa.gov/insect-repellents](https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents) and select "Finding a repellent that is right for you"
- Environmental Working Group (EWG): [ewg.org](https://www.ewg.org) and search "2018 Guide to Bug Repellents"
- Advice from Pediatricians: [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) and search "Choosing an insect repellent for your child"

To learn more about insect-borne diseases and find out if you are in a high-risk area:

- Lyme disease: [cdc.gov/lyme](https://www.cdc.gov/lyme) and select "Data and Surveillance"
- West Nile Virus: [cdc.gov/westnile](https://www.cdc.gov/westnile) and select "Statistics and Maps"
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever: [cdc.gov/rmsf](https://www.cdc.gov/rmsf) and select "Epidemiology and Statistics"
- Zika: [cdc.gov/zika](https://www.cdc.gov/zika) and select "Statistics and Maps"

For more information, visit nyscheck.org/rxs

