



FACT SHEET: WNV Insect Repellent Use and Spray

Insect repellents help reduce their exposure to mosquito bites that may carry potentially serious viruses such as West Nile Virus and allow them to continue to play and work outdoors. Many of the mosquitoes that carry the West Nile Virus are especially likely to bite around dusk and dawn. If you are outdoors during these times, it is important to apply repellent. In many parts of the country, there are mosquitoes that also bite during the day. These mosquitoes have also been found to carry the West Nile Virus. The safest decision is to apply repellent whenever you are outdoors. Some general considerations to remember in order to use the products containing DEET safely are:

Always follow the recommendations appearing on the product label.

- 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.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.
- Do not spray aerosol or pump products in enclosed areas.
- Do not apply aerosol or pump products directly to your face. Spray your hands and then rub them carefully over the face, avoiding eyes and mouth.

The most effective repellents contain DEET (n, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), which is an ingredient used to repel pests like mosquitoes and ticks. DEET has been tested against a variety of biting insects and has been shown to be very effective. The more DEET a repellent contains the longer time it will protect you from mosquito bites. A higher percentage of DEET in a repellent does not mean that your protection is better-just that it will last longer. DEET poses no significant health risk when used properly. It may be applied to skin, pets, clothing, tents, bedrolls and screens.

DEET should NOT be used on infants under two years of age, or children's bedding or bedclothes.

Concentrations of less than 10% should be used on children under the age of twelve.

For adults, a maximum concentration of 30% is recommended.

When applying, avoid wounds, scratches, and the area around the eyes and mouth.

Keep out of reach of small children, because like many chemicals DEET can be toxic if ingested.

Do not allow small children to apply the product themselves.

Do not apply to the hands of small children, since they frequently put their hands in their mouth.

Cleanse the skin with soap and water after returning indoors.

Avoid over-saturation. It is not necessary for adequate protection.

A small percentage of children and adults may be sensitive to chemicals such as DEET. If there is a suspected reaction to the chemical, wash the area and seek medical attention.

Always follow the recommendations appearing on the product label when using repellent on children.

- When using repellent on a child, apply it to your own hands and then rub them on your child. Avoid the child's eyes and mouth and use sparingly around the ears.
- Do not apply repellent to children's hands. (*Children 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.
- Do not apply repellent to skin under clothing. If repellent is applied to clothing, wash treated clothing before wearing again.

Using repellents on the skin is not the only way to avoid mosquito bites. Children and adults can wear clothing with long pants and long sleeves while outdoors. DEET or other repellents such as permethrin can also be applied to clothing (*don't use permethrin on skin*), as mosquitoes may bite through fabric. Mosquito netting can be used over infant carriers. Finally, it may be possible to reduce the number of mosquitoes in the area by getting rid of containers with standing water that provide breeding places for the mosquitoes.



For More Information Contact or Visit the Following Websites:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPT. 3415 – 28TH STREET PORT HURON, MI 48060 (810) 987-5306

www.stclaircounty.org/offices/health/updates.asp

www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus

www.cdc.gov