

Beat the bite!

FAQs about mosquito repellents



What are the most effective mosquito repellents?

Repellents containing picaridin or DEET are the most effective. These products are available in different concentrations, or strengths, ranging from 3 to 100 percent DEET, or 10 – 20% picaridin. All these products are effective in repelling mosquitoes, but higher concentrations provide a longer duration of protection.

Repellents come in lotions, gels, aerosols and pump sprays. All repellents containing picaridin or DEET are effective when used correctly, but lotions and gels are easier to apply properly.

Natural repellents (such as Citronella or Eucalyptus) provide only very limited protection. Devices like mosquito bands and sound emitters are gimmicks.

How do I apply repellent?

Like sunscreen, repellent is only effective if applied to all exposed skin. A few dabs here or there will not keep mosquitoes away. Aim to apply a thin, even layer to all exposed skin.

If using a liquid formulation, such as a lotion or gel, pour or squeeze straight onto your hands and spread a thin, even layer on all exposed skin. Avoid getting repellent on your eyes or lips. Wipe or wash the palms of your hands after application.

If using an aerosol or pump spray, spray directly onto exposed skin to create a thin, even layer. Do not apply aerosols or pump sprays direct to your face - spray them on your hands first and then carefully rub the repellent onto your face and neck to avoid getting the repellent on your eyes or lips. Wipe or wash the palms of your hands after application.

How often do I need to reapply repellent?

Always read the label before use. Products with higher strengths of picaridin or DEET offer longer protection. The commonly available 10-20 percent formulations will generally provide one to three hours of protection in typical situations. Sweating from hot weather or exercise will reduce the time of protection and the repellent will need to be applied more frequently.

Repellent should be reapplied after swimming, regardless of the strength. Repellent is not water-resistant like many sunscreens.

How do I use repellent together with sunscreen?

It is better to use a separate sunscreen and repellent, than a combined product.

Apply sunscreen first, then the repellent over the top. Repellents containing DEET may reduce the effectiveness of sunscreen, so use a product with picaridin instead, or reapply the sunscreen more frequently than normal.

Are repellents safe to use on babies and young children?

Repellents are generally safe for use on children over two months, but always check the label. Never allow children to apply their own repellent. Avoid applying repellent to their hands and around their eyes and mouth.

Avoid products containing more than 20percent DEET.

Babies younger than 2 months of age should be protected by draping a mosquito net over their pram or carrier, taking care to avoid any gaps.

Minimise the use of repellent by covering up children and babies as much as possible to reduce the amount of exposed skin. But remember that mosquitoes can bite through tight clothing, so clothing should be loose-fitting with secure cuffs around the ankles or wrists.

Are repellents safe to use?

Repellents are safe if used according to directions. Always use the lowest strength picaridin or DEET product required. Apply just enough to create a thin, even layer on all exposed skin. Bathe or shower to remove the repellent as soon as it is no longer required.

Registered repellents are safe for use during pregnancy and breastfeeding when used according to label directions.

Be aware that DEET may cause damage to plastics such as high performance clothing, wrist watches or sunglasses. If concerned, use a product that contains picaridin.

If you have any concerns about your health, see your doctor or phone **NURSE-ON-CALL 1300 60 60 24**

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