
Protect your family from insect bites

Follow these steps to protect yourself and your family against mosquitos, ticks and other insects that bite or sting. This reduces the risk of getting the diseases they transmit.

1. Choose travel destinations wisely
 2. Plan activities to avoid bites
 3. Cover up
 4. Treat your clothing
 5. Use insect repellent
 6. Sleep under a bed net
 7. Remove ticks
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1. Choose travel destinations wisely

If possible, do not travel to places with a high risk of diseases spread by insects.

To see which places have higher risk, look for health notices:

- Government of Canada - **Travel health and safety**
<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety> Select 'Travel health notices'
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - **Travelers' Health**
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

2. Plan activities to avoid bites

If possible, stay indoors during peak times of insect activity.

Mosquitos with...	Are most active from...
Dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya and Zika	During the day: sunrise to sunset
Malaria, West Nile and Japanese encephalitis	During the night: sunset to sunrise

Avoid wooded or grassy areas where ticks and other insects live.

3. Cover up

Cover as much of your skin as possible. Clothing protects you.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, socks and shoes (instead of sandals) and a hat.
- Tuck your shirt into your pants, and your pants into your socks.

Protect children under 2 by covering their car seat, stroller, crib or playpen with mosquito netting that has an elastic edge for a tight fit.

4. Treat your clothing

- Treat clothes with permethrin or buy pretreated clothing. The protection lasts even after many washes. Do not put permethrin on your skin.

OR

- Apply insect repellent to your clothes. You don't need to soak the fabric for it to work. The protection lasts a short time. Re-apply it after washing.

5. Use insect repellent

How to apply repellent

- Always follow the directions on the product label. Use only when needed.
- Apply to exposed skin. Do not use on cuts, wounds or irritated skin. Do not apply under clothing.
- Do not spray your face. Spray onto your hands, then rub it on your face.
- Avoid getting repellent in your eyes or mouth. Use just a little around your ears.
- Use just enough repellent to cover the exposed skin. You don't need to apply a lot. If you notice insects starting to bite, apply a bit more.
- Wash your hands after applying repellent.
- Reapply as needed. Follow directions on the product label.

For advice about buying insect repellent, go to page 4.

Applying repellent on children

- Most insect repellents can be used on children over 2 years of age.
- Apply repellent to your hands and then gently spread it onto your child's skin. Don't put it directly on your child's hands.
- Do not let children handle repellents.



Health Canada does not recommend insect repellent for children under 6 months of age. Protect them with a mosquito net when they are outdoors in a crib, playpen or stroller.

However, in some situations the risk of disease from insect bites may be far greater than the risk of using repellent. This is especially true in areas where malaria is common.

How to remove repellent

- When you return indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.
- If you wore treated clothing, check the product label to see if you should wash them before wearing again.

6. Sleep under a bed net

- If your room does not have screens or air conditioning, sleep under a bed net. Some bed nets are treated with insecticide for extra protection.
- If the bed net doesn't touch the floor, tuck it under your mattress.

7. Remove ticks

- Different kinds of ticks carry different diseases.
- If you go in areas known to have ticks, check your entire body each day. Remove any ticks right away.

Buying insect repellent

Insect repellent comes in lotion, liquid, wipes or spray.

The recommended ingredients are DEET or icaridin (also called picardin). Icaridin is as effective as DEET and doesn't cause skin irritation.

Unregistered or 'natural' ingredients are not recommended.

The choice of insect repellent depends on the person's age.

For children:

Under 6 months of age:

- If going to an area with malaria, icaridin (up to 20%) or DEET 10% may be used, even though it is not approved by Health Canada.

6 months to 2 years of age:

- The best choice is icaridin (up to 20%). DEET 10% may be used as a second choice.
- Can use products that contain up to 10% DEET once a day.

Children 2 to 12 years of age:

- Can use products that contain up to 10% DEET three times a day.

For adults:

- Adults can use products with DEET (20% or more) or icaridin (20%)
- Higher amounts of DEET (over 20%) don't work better, they just last longer.
- If you are outside for a short time or can reapply when you are out longer, a repellent with 10% or less DEET is enough.

**If repellent causes a rash, itching or swelling, wash it off.
Do not use it again. Try another product.**