

# USE OF PERSONAL INSECT REPELLENTS

## What Child care Providers Need to Know



Insects that bite people can carry diseases such as West Nile Virus (Mosquitoes) or Lyme Disease (Ticks). Some simple ideas for avoiding child exposure to insects are:

- Avoid spending time outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeved shirts, long pants and a hat.
- Light-coloured clothing is best because mosquitoes tend to be more attracted to dark colours.
- Make sure that door and window screens fit tightly.

However, in areas where these diseases exist, application of insect repellents may be requested by the parents of children in your care. This information can be shared with the parent when deciding how best to protect them from insect bites.

Health Canada has recently reviewed the use of repellents for children and has the following advice for safe use:

### General Use Information for All Personal Insect Repellents

- Only use "registered" insect repellents that have been evaluated for use by Health Canada. The product label will say "Insect Repellent" and have a Registration number on the container label (i.e.: REG No. 27107 P.C.P. Act)
- Always read the entire label carefully before using. Follow all of the label directions, including restrictions for use on young children and the maximum number of applications allowed per day.
- Never use a product labeled as an insecticide on the body.
- Apply the repellent sparingly and only on exposed skin surfaces or on top of clothing. Do not use under clothing. Heavy application is unnecessary for it to work. Repeat applications only as necessary.
- Do not get in eyes. If repellent does get in child's eyes, rinse immediately with water.
- Do not use products that are "combined" sunscreen and insect repellents.
- Do not use repellents on open wounds or if skin is irritated or sunburned.
- Use spray mist products only in well-ventilated areas or use products that are repellent wipes or towelettes.
- Do not use near food.
- Wash treated skin with soap and water when you return indoors or when protection is no longer needed.
- Keep all insect repellents out of the reach of children.
- Always supervise the application on children.

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- Avoid applying repellent to children's hands and face to reduce the chance of getting the repellent in their eyes and mouth.
- If you suspect that a child is reacting to an insect repellent, stop using the product immediately, wash treated skin and seek medical attention. If you go to the doctor, take the product container with you. HealthLink BC is available for medical consultation province-wide by dialing 8-1-1.
- If the parent is concerned about child sensitivity, advise that Health Canada recommends that they apply the product to a small area of skin on the arm and wait 24 hours to see if a reaction occurs.

For repellents containing DEET:

### Children under 6 months of age

- DO NOT use personal insect repellents containing DEET on infants.

### Children aged 6 months to 2 years

- The use of one application per day of DEET may be considered for this age group.
- The least concentrated product (10% DEET or less) should be used.
- As with all insect repellents, the product should be applied sparingly and not be applied to the face and hands.
- Prolonged use should be avoided.

### Children between 2 –12 years of age

- The least concentrated product (10% DEET or less) should be used.
- Do not apply more than three times a day
- Prolonged use should be avoided.

Protection Time Based on DEET Concentration	
Concentration	Protection Time (Approx)
10%	3 Hours
5%	2 Hours

Besides DEET there are four different active ingredients found in registered personal insect repellents in Canada. The active ingredient, its concentration, protection time and use instructions are all listed on each product label. Make sure they are "registered" as personal insect repellents. Read the label carefully regarding the age limitations and the number of allowable applications.

For more detailed information on insect repellents visit the website <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/wn-no/index-eng.php> and follow the links under the heading West Nile Virus.

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