AAP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSECT REPELLENT USE IN CHILDREN

Proper use of insect repellents can protect your children from some diseases as well as irritating bug bites. The following are recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Environmental Protection Agency regarding insect repellent use in children:

- Do not apply to children under 2 months of age.
- Use up to 30% DEET, depending on the duration of outdoor activities. Avoid use of higher concentrations in children.
- Apply only to exposed skin and/or clothing. Do not use repellents under clothing.
- Do not apply to eyes or mouth, and apply sparingly around ears. Do not spray directly on face – spray on hands first and then apply to face.
- Never apply over cuts, eczema, or other breaks in the skin.
- A parent or caregiver should apply the repellent; children may inadvertently ingest it through hand-to-mouth activity.
- Wash repellents off with soap and water at the end of the day.
- Combination products containing DEET and sunscreen are not recommended, primarily because sunscreen should be reapplied frequently, particularly for activities centered around water, which will remove the sunscreen. In contrast, repellents should be applied as infrequently as possible.

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Other general guidelines include using a concentration of DEET appropriate for the duration of outdoor activity. The average protection time of 30% DEET is 5 hours; for 10% DEET protection is about 1-2 hours. A product called picaridin (available in similar concentrations and recommended in similar concentrations) has also been recommended by the Center for Disease Control as an alternative to DEET. Recommendations for picaridin in children are currently not available.
PREVENTION OF MOSQUITO BITES:
  • Avoid being outdoors during peak times of day for bites: early morning and dusk.
  • Avoid use of fragrances on the body when outdoors.
  • Regularly empty any standing water outside the home.
  • Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.

(Revised 6/07)