



# SEASONAL HEALTH ALERT

Questions, contact WAPC by emailing [mryuk@wapc.org](mailto:mryuk@wapc.org).

## Insect Repellents, Personal Pesticides, and “Bug Spray”

Summer heat means more time outside, and it’s important to take precautions to avoid biting and stinging insects. The Washington Poison Center is here to keep you safe and healthy with some helpful tips.

Washington stinging insects include: *biting flies, fleas, mosquitos and ticks*. These insects carry: *West Nile Virus, Lyme Disease, Tularemia, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever*.

### TIPS TO PREVENT INSECT BITES

- Wear pants and long sleeves to cover skin.
- Check yourself, children, and pets for ticks.
- Fix all windows and door screens.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding areas by emptying sources of standing water like outdoor pet dishes and plant saucers.



### BEFORE YOU APPLY REPELLANTS OR PERSONAL PESTICIDES

- **Read product labels.** The labels contain information about active ingredients, instructions for safe use, and what to do in case of unintended exposures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends using products that list an **EPA Registration Number**.
- **Follow the application instructions.** Do not spray directly onto the face, open cuts, or irritated skin. Do not apply to a child’s hands and **do not allow children to handle the product or apply to themselves.**
- **Store safely.** Keep products up high, out of sight and out of reach of children.

### INFORMATION ABOUT REPELLANTS AND PERSONAL PESTICIDE PRODUCTS

#### DEET Containing Products

- Considered the gold standard for insect repellent
- Has not been found to cause environmental damage.
- Products containing 10%-30% DEET are suggested for **children older than 2 months of age**.
- 10% DEET provides 2 hours of coverage, 30% provides about 5 hours of coverage

#### Other Plant-Based Products

- The CDC recognizes some eucalyptus and citronella plant-based products as effective repellents or protectants.
- Products containing eucalyptus (sometimes called PMD) are **not recommended for use on children under 3 years of age.**
- Products generally don’t last as long and may have to be applied more frequently.

If you, or another person, is having an allergic reaction to a bite or sting, experiencing difficulty breathing, face swelling, or tightening of the throat  
CALL 911

The Washington Poison Center is always here to help, 24/7/365, by calling: 1 (800) 222-1222.  
All calls are free and confidential.