



SEASONAL HEALTH ALERT

Insect Repellents, Personal Pesticides, & “Bug Spray”

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Contact WAPC at mryuk@wapc.org with questions

As we spend more time outside during the summer, 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’s biting insects include: *biting flies, fleas, mosquitoes 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.



Image of Western black-legged ticks

Source: California Department of Public Health

BEFORE YOU APPLY REPELLENTS 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 REPELLENTS 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.