



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 insects. Washington’s biting insects include: *biting flies, fleas, mosquitoes, and ticks.*

TIPS TO PREVENT INSECT BITES

- Wear pants, long sleeves, and socks to cover skin, and/or insect repellent clothing.
- Check yourself, children, and pets for ticks. [Remove ticks quickly and carefully.](#)
- Eliminate mosquito breeding areas by emptying sources of standing water (ex: outdoor pet dishes, potted plant trays).
- Cover any gaps in walls, doors, windows, and screens.



Image of Western black-legged ticks

Source: California Department of Public Health

SELECTING & APPLYING REPELLENTS OR PERSONAL PESTICIDES

- Use products that list an EPA Registration Number. These products are proven to be safe and effective when used correctly.
- Always read the label before applying the product. Labels contain information about active ingredients, instructions for safe use, and what to do in case of accidental exposures.
- Follow the application instructions. Do not spray directly onto the face, on 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.
- If also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and repellent second.
- 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

- DEET is considered the gold standard for insect repellent.
- DEET has not been found to cause environmental damage or health problems (when used correctly).
- DEET-containing products are safe to use on adults, children, & infants older than 2 months.
- The concentration of DEET in a product relates to the length of time it will be effective, **not** whether it will work better. Lower concentrations may need to be reapplied.

Other Plant-Based Products

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