Prescriptions for Prevention

Insect Repellents

Did you know?

Weather events increase insect bites, including ticks and mosquitoes which can lead to serious illness.

Action Plan

- Insect repellent ("bug spray") can be a safe and effective way to protect children from bug bites, but it's important to use it correctly.
- **In high humidity areas and at night**: Choose repellents containing 20-30% DEET (lasts 5 hours) or 20% picaridin (lasts 3-7 hours), oil of lemon eucalyptus (for children over 3).
- **Apply Repellent Safely**:
  - Apply outdoors and away from food. Apply directly onto clothes and exposed skin––do not apply under clothes.
  - For young children, spray into your hands before rubbing onto their skin.
  - Do not apply to eyes, mouth, open wounds, or children's hands.
  - Apply on top of sunscreen. Avoid combined sunscreen-repellent products because sunscreen has to be applied often. DEET should be applied just once a day.
  - Avoid products containing more than 30% DEET.
  - Store products away from young children.
- **After Using Repellent**: Wash skin with soap and water. Launder clothes. Check your children's skin closely for ticks from head-to-toe, including the scalp, armpits, and groin.
- **Wear Protective Clothing Outdoors**: Wear long-sleeved shirts and tuck pants into socks to prevent bug bites.
- **Protecting Newborns**: Do not use repellents on babies younger than 2 months. Use protective clothing or mosquito netting on strollers instead.
- To learn about how to prevent mosquito and tick bites, click this link or scan the QR code:

Perelman School of Medicine University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health
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Resources

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

If your child swallows a product containing DEET, rinse out their mouth, have them drink water, and contact their physician or the **Poison Control Center** at **1-888-222-1222**. For more information about CHOP's Do's and Don't for Poison Prevention, click **this link** or scan the QR code:

While shopping, use these guides to help find the right insect repellent for you:

- The **Environmental Protection Agency** has a list of accredited insect repellents. To find the repellent that is right for you, click **this link** or scan the QR code:
- To access the **Environmental Working Group's** "Guide to Bug Repellents," click **this link** or scan the QR code:

To learn more about insect-borne diseases found in the Philadelphia region and find out if you are in a high-risk area:

- **Lyme Disease**. Click **this link** or scan the QR code:
- **West Nile Virus**. Click **this link** or scan the QR code:
- **Zika**. Click **this link** or scan the QR code:

For more information on the resources here or other questions, contact the Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health at:
215-573-9076 prcceh@pennmedicine.upenn.edu
Website: prcceh.upenn.edu

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