



Don't Bug Me! Preventing Bug Bites

Bugs are part of our summer landscape. And while most bug bites are just an itchy nuisance, some bugs that bite carry viruses and infection. The best way to combat bites is to prevent them.

Repellent: What to know before you buy

1. Choose a lotion or a pump spray product. Do not use aerosol sprays that increase the risk of inhaling chemicals.
2. Repellents work on biting insects like mosquitoes, flies and ticks, but they don't repel stinging insects like bees and hornets.
3. Lotions that combine repellent and sunscreen might sound like a good idea, but they aren't. Sunscreen needs to be reapplied every few hours, but you shouldn't expose your children to that much repellent. Apply each product separately.

DEET is a highly effective repellent, but it is important that it's used correctly. Higher percentages of DEET increase the length of protection, not the effectiveness. So, choose the strength that is safe for your child, and only apply it once per day:

- DEET should not be used on children younger than 2 months of age.
- Children ages 2 months to 1 year can safely use products containing 7.5 percent DEET or less.
- Children older than 1 year can use products containing 15 percent DEET or less.
- Products with up to 30 percent DEET can be put on strollers, shoes and clothing — but NOT directly on skin.

Picaridin is a colorless, odorless synthetic ingredient found in some bug repellents. It is relatively new in the United States, but has been used in Europe for more than 10 years. It is similar to DEET and provides long-lasting protection against bugs. Products with picaridin can be used on babies as young as 2 months.

Natural repellents are made with plant oils such as citronella, lemongrass and peppermint. They generally need to be reapplied often to be effective.

Repellent: How to apply

Once you've chosen a bug repellent, it's important that you use it properly in order for it to be safe. Here are some tips:

- Always follow the instructions for application, and help younger kids apply repellent safely.
- Apply product only to exposed skin. Avoid hands, eyes, cuts, or irritations.
- Wash your hands after application, and wash the repellent off when your child is done playing outside.
- Only spray repellent outside and never near food.

More smart ways to keep bugs at bay:

- Avoid being outside from dusk until dawn — these are peak mosquito hours.
- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with tall grass.
- When outdoors, be careful eating or drinking uncovered foods or beverages, which can attract insects.
- Don't go barefoot. Wear closed-toe shoes when walking in grassy areas.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots.
- Always do a full body check for ticks after going inside.

The Kohl's Cares Grow Safe & Healthy Program is a partnership of Kohl's Cares and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. For more outdoor safety tips, visit [KohlsSafeandHealthy.com](https://www.kohls.com/SAFEandHEALTHY).