



The Use of Insect Repellent by Child Care Programs

Insect bites can cause local allergic reactions and some diseases. Of particular concern are bites from mosquitoes and ticks. Mosquitoes can carry viruses and parasites that cause West Nile virus or other illnesses. These diseases can be serious but they are also rare. There has been an increase of reported cases of West Nile virus disease in California, and this is cause for concern. However, taking care to prevent exposure to the insects that carry these diseases is important, and preparation is better than panic when there is an outbreak. To reduce the risk of insect bites, children and adults can wear loose fitting clothing of lightweight material with long sleeves and long pants. Insect repellents can also be used.

What are the most effective insect repellents? A wide variety of insect repellents are available. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends using products that contain active ingredients that are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA.) Insect repellents currently registered by the EPA contain:

- DEET,
- Picaridin or
- Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.

These products have been tested and have been found to be safe and effective if used according to label instructions. Use the concentration of repellent that is appropriate for the amount of time you will be exposed. Higher concentrations are not more effective, but work for a longer period of time. To reduce the risk of adverse effects, use the lowest concentration you can for your situation. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends using products that have a 30% or less concentration of DEET and that repellents not be used on children under two months of age. Also note that labels for Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus products state that they should not be used on children under 3 years. Both the AAP and the EPA recommend the following precautions when using insect repellents:

- Apply repellents only to exposed skin and or clothing. Do not use under clothing.
- Never use repellents over cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- Do not apply to eyes or mouth, and apply sparingly around ears. When using sprays, do not spray directly on face, spray on hands first and then apply to face.
- Do not allow children to handle the product. When using on children apply to your own hands first. Do not apply on children's hands.
- Use just enough to cover exposed skin, heavy applications do not work better. If a thin film does not work, you can apply a bit more.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water. Also wash treated clothing before wearing again. (Check product label for further instructions.)
- If a child develops a rash, stop using the product, wash with mild soap and water and call poison control or your doctor for guidance.

For more information, see CCHP's related Health and Safety Notes *Summer Safety and West Nile Virus: What You Should Know*. Visit www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org or call the Healthline (1-800-333-3212) for copies.

Resources and References:

American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005, <http://aap.org/family/wnv-jun05.htm>

California Department of Health Service, 2006, http://westnile.ca.gov/mosquito_repellent.htm

http://ipm.ucdavis.edu/PDF/PESTNOTES/pnlyme_disease.pdf

Centers for Disease Control, 2006. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/RepellentUpdates.htm>

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Parent/Guardian Permission to Apply Insect Repellent to Child

Name of Child: _____

As a parent, I recognize that insect bites to my child pose a risk of allergic reactions and disease.

Therefore, I give permission for the staff of _____ to apply
name of child care program
an insect repellent approved for use on children (name of product) _____

to my child under the following conditions:

1. When mosquitoes are present.
2. During field trips that may expose a child to ticks or mosquitoes.
3. Always used according to directions on the label.
4. Applied only to exposed skin and clothes.
5. Not applied to babies under 2 months.
6. Not applied near eyes or mouth or on hands.

Use of the insect repellent products may occasionally cause a skin reaction. If that happens, we will discontinue use of the product, wash affected skin and notify you so you can seek advice from your health care provider. It is best if you use this or a similar product on your child once or twice at home first to monitor for reactions.

I have checked and initialed below all applicable information regarding the child care program's choice in brand/type and use of insect repellent for my child:

- ___ Staff may use the program's insect repellent indicated above according to the directions on the product label.
- ___ I do not know of any allergies my child has to children's insect repellent.
- ___ My child is allergic to some insect repellents. Please use only the following brand(s)/type(s) of repellent: _____, according to the directions on the label.
- ___ I have provided the following brand/type of insect repellent for use on my child: _____
- ___ For medical or personal reasons, please DO NOT apply insect repellent to the following areas of my child's body: _____
- ___ **Please do not apply insect repellent to my child.**

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Health Provider's Signature (optional): _____