

Insect Repellent Safety

A La Bug!

Mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks can be annoying and sometimes pose a serious risk to public health. In the United States, mosquitoes can transmit diseases like St. Louis encephalitis and West Nile virus. Biting flies can inflict a painful bite that can persist for days, swell and become infected. Ticks can transmit serious diseases like Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and Ehrlichiosis. When properly used, insect repellents can discourage biting insects from landing on treated skin or clothing. The following tips are from EPA.



Choosing Insect Repellents

Consider non-chemical ways to deter biting insects. Use structural barriers such as window screens or netting, or wear long-sleeve shirts, long pants and socks. If non-chemical methods prove to be ineffective, an insect repellent may be necessary. Repellents are available in various forms and concentrations: they can be applied directly to the skin, to clothing or found in pre-treated clothing.

Some provide protection time information on the product label. The label on the repellent product is your guide to using these products safely and effectively. It contains information that you should read and understand before you use a repellent product. Also, repellents that do not bear an EPA registration number have not been evaluated by EPA, and the agency cannot advise consumers about the effectiveness of these products.



Using Insect Repellents Safely

EPA requires labels to list certain important precautions in order to use pesticides safely and effectively, and to prevent harmful exposure. You should read and understand this information before you use a pesticide product. Remember:

- Pesticide labels provide instructions about proper handling, use and application rates of the product, and precautions to protect people and the environment.
- Label directions are derived from scientific testing by manufacturers and evaluation by EPA scientists to ensure that products can be used with minimal risk to people and the environment.
- Read the label first.
- Learn more about what's on a product label at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/label/index.html>.

Other than the precautions listed on the product label, EPA does not recommend any additional precautions for using registered repellents on pregnant or lactating women, or on children. The agency also recommends you store pesticides away from children's reach, in a locked utility cabinet or garden shed.

