**Using Insect Repellents Safely and Effectively**

# Use of Insect Repellents at School and School Sponsored Activities

# To reduce the risk of insect bites/stings at schools and minimize the need for personal insect repellents schools should start with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices or Best Management Practices (BMPs) both help minimize insect and repellent exposure.

# While personal insect repellants can be effective at reducing bites from ticks and insects, they are not without health risks. For more information please see the New York State Department of Health’s [Tick and Insect Repellents: Deciding on Their Use](https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2749/).

# Personal Insect repellants are not governed by laws regarding the use of pesticides on school grounds and are not considered medications.  Parents/guardians should be instructed to have their child wear appropriate clothing (i.e. light-colored, long sleeves, pants) for the activity to minimize the need for insect repellant, and to apply insect repellant at home before sending their child to school. However, if the child needs insect repellant applied at school, they will require parent/guardian written consent.

# It is strongly recommended that aerosol insect repellant is ****NOT**** used in schools.

# Some students may apply insect repellents but should be supervised by an adult when doing so and not be permitted to carry insect repellant on school grounds. Students should never apply insect repellant on another student or adult.

# If students require assistance from staff, staff should limit the number of students they assist to minimize their exposure (one person should not apply repellant to an entire class), wear gloves and wash their hands after use. Staff applying insect repellant should know:

* Children may be at greater risk for health effects from repellents, in part, because their exposure may be greater.
* Keep repellents out of the reach of children.
* Use only small amounts of repellent on children

# Additional information on the safe use of insect repellents can be found in the New York State Center for School Health (NYSCSH)  [NYSCSH Tick and Tickborne Disease Toolkit.](https://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=7515308d-2a8e09bf-7517c9b8-000babd905ee-74bea3255b9df2ac&q=1&e=1e15fe7f-c3e4-4455-957e-1cdb17a553cc&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.schoolhealthny.com%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageType%3D3%26ModuleInstanceID%3D219%26ViewID%3D7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f%26RenderLoc%3D0%26FlexDataID%3D199%26PageID%3D144)

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<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/using-insect-repellents-safely-and-effectively>

**Applying the Product**

* Apply and re-apply a repellent according to the label instructions.
* If also using sunscreen, **apply sunscreen first**, and insect repellent second.
* Apply repellents only to exposed skin and/or clothing. Do not use under clothing.
* Do not apply near eyes and mouth and apply sparingly around ears.
* When using sprays, do not spray directly into face; spray on hands first and then apply to face. Avoid breathing a spray product.
* Do not apply to children's hands as they often touch their mouth and eyes.
* When using on children, apply to your own hands and then put it on the child.
* Never use repellents over cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
* Do not spray in enclosed areas – apply outdoors instead.
* Do not use it near food.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends EPA-registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.

How well insect repellents not registered with the EPA, including some natural repellents, is not known. The EPA registration number (EPA Reg. No.) on the label means the company provided EPA with technical information on the effectiveness of the product.

DEET is approved for use on children with no age restriction. Also, there is no restriction on the percentage of DEET in the product for use on children.

**Additional Information About Safe Use of Insect Repellents**

* [Insect Repellent Use and Safety](http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html) - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
* [Traveler's Health: Mosquito and Tick Protection](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites) - CDC
* [Repellents and Children](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Insect-Repellents.aspx) - American Academy of Pediatrics
* [DEET General Fact Sheet](http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/DEETgen.html) - NPIC

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