

## Protecting Ourselves Against Mosquito Bites

Recent outbreaks of mosquito-borne viral illnesses have raised questions about how to protect against the mosquitoes that transmit dengue, Zika, and other viral diseases. Here in the United States, it is recommended that efforts be made to reduce mosquito numbers and exposure.

[Insect repellents registered by the U.S. EPA](#) (Environmental Protection Agency) can be expected to repel these mosquitoes, provided the EPA-approved labeling says the product is for use to protect against mosquitoes in general or against Aedes mosquitoes in particular. Look for an EPA registration number (EPA Reg. No.) on the insect repellent product label. When using repellents, always follow label directions and [safety precautions](#).

Which mosquito repellents work best?

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the use of products containing active ingredients which have been registered with the EPA for use as repellents applied to skin and clothing. Of these products, those containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection.

**Oil of lemon eucalyptus products should not be used on children under the age of three.**

EPA registration means that EPA does not expect the product to cause adverse effects to human health or the environment when used according to the label. Because children frequently put their hands in their eyes and mouths, do not allow children to handle repellents, and **do not apply to children's hands**. When using on children, apply to your own hands to then wipe it on the child. After returning indoors, wash your child's treated skin and clothes with soap and water or bathe. Always store insect repellents safely out of the reach of children. If you are concerned about using repellent products on your child, you may wish to consult your child's health care provider for advice, or contact the [National Pesticide Information Center \(NPIC\)](#) toll-free number: 1-800-858-7378.

Insect repellents are only one part of a more comprehensive program to control mosquitoes that transmit diseases. You can, for example, exclude mosquitoes from your home by using window and door screens. Dress in light-colored clothing, long pants, long sleeves, shoes, socks, and a hat. Wear gloves when gardening. Avoid areas where mosquitoes are present. [Take other actions](#), such as removing sources of standing water to limit breeding sites. A fan on the porch or patio can also help; mosquitoes dislike windy areas.