

Safe use of insect repellents can minimize itching, scratching

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Summer is back, and so are mosquitoes. Before you reach for the insect repellent, review these tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Apply repellents only to exposed skin or clothing, following the directions on the product label.

- The AAP recommends that products containing DEET not be used on children younger than 2 months old. Instead, use mosquito netting with an elastic edge to ensure a tight fit around a stroller.
- Products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children younger than 3 years old.
- Avoid products that contain both repellent and sunscreen because sunscreen generally should be reapplied more often than insect repellent.
- Do not use repellents under clothes.
- Never use repellents over cuts, wounds or irritated skin.
- Do not spray directly on the face; apply with your hands.
- Do not allow young children to apply repellents themselves.
- Do not use sprays in enclosed areas or near food.
- Reapply if washed off by sweating or getting wet.
- Avoid reapplying repellents on young children unless necessary.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water or have the child bathe.
- If your child develops a rash or other reaction from an insect repellent, wash the repellent off with soap and water and contact the child's pediatrician or call the U.S. poison control center at 800-222-1222 for guidance.

Despite your best efforts, your child still may get a mosquito bite. If this happens, tell your child to try not to scratch the area, and dab it with alcohol or calamine. In addition, keep the area clean to prevent skin infections.