



## **USE OF INSECT REPELLENT (Adults and children over 12 years of age)**

### **Why should I use insect repellent?**

Insect repellents reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes that may carry West Nile Virus (WNV). Insect repellents are only one method of reducing mosquito bites and should be part of an overall protection plan that includes avoiding areas with large numbers of mosquitoes, staying indoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active, and wearing light coloured protective clothing including long pants and long sleeves.

### **What type of insect repellent should I choose?**

Use only insect repellents that are registered in Canada. There are numerous products on the market including ones that contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) and others that are DEET-free. If you use a product that contains DEET, Health Canada recommends that it contain less than 30 per cent DEET for adults and less than 10 per cent DEET for children. Read the labels carefully to determine if it is the right product for you.

*It is important to choose a repellent that you are likely to use consistently and that will provide sufficient protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors.*

### **How do I apply insect repellent?**

- Always read and follow the directions on the product label.
- Before first use, check for skin sensitivity to the insect repellent by applying it to a small area of skin on the arm. Wait 24 hours to see if there are any adverse reactions, such as itching or redness.
- Apply insect repellent sparingly on exposed skin and on the surface of thin clothing. There is no need to apply to skin under clothing.
- Do not use insect repellent on open wounds or irritated or sunburned skin.
- Do not get insect repellent in your eyes. If this happens, rinse with water right away.
- Avoid breathing mist from spray-type repellents. Apply in a well-ventilated area. Do not spray near food. Never apply spray inside a tent.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while applying an insect repellent. Wash treated skin with soap and water when you return indoors or when protection is no longer needed.
- If you suspect that you are reacting to an insect repellent, stop using the product immediately, wash treated skin and seek medical attention. When you go to the doctor, take the product container with you.
- Keep all insect repellent out of the reach of children.
- Do not use insect repellent on pets.

## **What are the guidelines for using both sunscreen and insect repellent at the same time?**

The best strategy is to apply sunscreen 20 minutes before outdoor activities and then apply insect repellent after the 20 minute period. If combination sunscreen and DEET products are used, they should be used **solely as an insect repellent**. Combination products have incompatible instructions for application. Insect repellents should be applied sparingly and sunscreens should be applied liberally for optimum protection.

**Note:** There is no indication that there is a hazard to the unborn or nursing child associated with the use of DEET products by pregnant or breastfeeding women. However, there are non-chemical methods to reduce mosquito bites (e.g., protective clothing, avoiding mosquito habitats and times of peak mosquito activity) which could be considered if you prefer an alternative to DEET.

## **Where can I find more information about WNV?**

For more information about WNV and the Region of Peel's Vector-Borne Disease Prevention Plan, call

**905-799-7700**

**from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday  
Caledon residents call toll-free at 905-584-2216.**

**[peel-bugbite.ca](http://peel-bugbite.ca)**