



## **WEST NILE VIRUS**

### **Children and the Use of Insect Repellent**

#### **Why should I use insect repellent on my child?**

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 time of day are mosquitoes most active?**

Children and adults are most likely to be bitten between dusk and dawn. Consider limiting the time spent outdoors at these times.

#### **What are the guidelines for using insect repellent on children?**

There is a wide selection of insect repellents registered in Canada. Prior to purchasing a repellent read the label instructions carefully and select a product that meets the needs of both you and your family. Some products are not recommended for children. For further information of insect repellents registered for sale in Canada visit the Federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency at [www.pmr-arla.gc.ca](http://www.pmr-arla.gc.ca) or ask your doctor.

#### **How do I safely use insect repellents?**

Children require adult assistance to apply insect repellent. Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's directions and follow these guidelines to ensure safe application:

- Do not use personal insect repellents containing DEET on infants under six months. Use a mosquito net when a child is in a crib, playpen or stroller outdoors.
- Do not allow young children to apply products themselves.
- Do not apply insect repellent products directly to children. Apply to your hands and then put it on the child's skin, avoiding the eyes, mouth, palms of hands, cuts or irritations. It is best to use liquid or cream insect repellents that can be applied by hand. Wash your hands after applying the product.
- If the child is attending summer camp, ensure he or she knows how to use the products properly.
- Apply insect repellent sparingly on exposed skin and on the outside of clothing. There is no need to apply to skin under clothing.
- Wash treated skin with soap and water when returning indoors or when protection is no longer needed.
- Store insect repellent out of reach of children.

## **What should I do if my child accidentally swallows an insect repellent?**

- Call a poison control centre immediately and seek medical attention.
- Take the insect repellent container with you to the emergency facility or physician.
- Follow the first aid statements on the label.

## **If a child is bitten by a mosquito should he or she be tested for West Nile Virus?**

No. Most mosquitoes are not infected with WNV. Even in areas where mosquitoes do carry the virus, very few mosquitoes are infected. The chances that any one bite will be from an infected mosquito are small.

## **If a child is bitten by an infected mosquito, will he or she get sick?**

Most people, including children, who are bitten by mosquitoes carrying the WNV, may experience no symptoms or a mild illness. Parents or caregivers should contact a doctor immediately if a child develops symptoms such as high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, severe headaches, stiff neck, or if his or her eyes become sensitive to light.

## **Where can I find more information about West Nile Virus?**

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)