

ATTENTION: SCHOOLS, PARENTS, AND CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

DEET and Mosquito Repellent Containing DEET Use Recommendations for Children

**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
August 29, 2003**

Mosquito bites may carry potentially serious viruses such as West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Virus, which can result in illness ranging from fever and aches to serious neurological diseases or even death. As of August 28, North Carolina has already had three human cases of West Nile Virus, one human case of EEE, and five human cases of LaCrosse Virus, with one death from West Nile. The best defense against mosquito-borne illness is preventing mosquito bites. Child care providers must receive written permission and instructions before administering DEET and mosquito repellent containing DEET to children in their care.

Avoid mosquitoes and their bites by:

- staying indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active
- covering your skin by wearing light-colored long-sleeved shirts and pants
- using mosquito repellent containing no more than 30% DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide or N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide)
- eliminating mosquito-breeding areas around homes (empty and remove containers that can hold water, such as old tires).

Children should not go outside without applying DEET*.

However, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends

- that DEET should not be applied to children more than once a day
- **that DEET should not be used on babies under two months of age**

(Child Care rules require that children go outdoors daily. If you do not choose to use mosquito repellent with DEET, then take into consideration the additional safeguards listed above such as removing standing water, appropriate protective clothing, etc.)

Adults may use DEET repellents more often.

Effectiveness of products with different concentration levels of DEET

Around 10% DEET - effective for periods of approximately 2 hours
21% to 25% DEET - provides 5 to 8 hours of protection
- is as safe to use as products with 10% or less DEET.

Some products that provide 5 to 8 hours of protection

- Backwoods Cutter Unscented Insect Repellent®
- OFF! DEEPWOODS Unscented®
- Bengal Insect Repellent®

Detailed DEET guidelines for families and for schools are on the N.C. Public Health arbovirus website, <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/arbovirus/>. Additionally, the August edition of the Child Care Health and Safety Bulletin published by the North Carolina Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center also has

excellent information about precautions to take to handle “Summer Nuisances” such as bugs, snakebites, etc. The Bulletin is available at http://healthychildcarenc.org/PDFs/ccnews_2003-08.pdf.