

Sunscreen & Insect Repellent



MICHIGAN POISON & DRUG
INFORMATION CENTER
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Q: Which should be applied first, sunscreen or insect repellent?

A: Apply sunscreen first if you need to use both. Wait about 20 minutes before applying insect repellent. Avoid applying to damaged skin or wounds.

Q: How often should I reapply sunscreen and insect repellent?

A: At least every 2 hours or after swimming or heavy sweating, reapply sunscreen according to directions based on SPF (Sun Protection Factor) for each product.

Insect repellent does not need to be reapplied as often as sunscreen. Follow directions for use.

Q: Can I use combination sunscreen and insect repellent products?

A: It is not recommended to use products that are a combination of sunscreen and insect repellent due to the difference in frequency for reapplication, and increased risk for sensitivity.

Q: What should I do if someone gets sunscreen or insect repellent in their eyes or mouth?

- A:**
- Avoid making anyone vomit.
 - For young children, wipe the mouth out well with only water and a cloth. There is no need to use soap to clean the mouth.
 - Adults can rinse their mouths well with water and spit it out.
 - Eyes should be rinsed with lukewarm or room-temperature water for 10-15 minutes. Call the Poison Helpline for more advice from our Specialists in Poison Information.

For more questions or help with unintended exposure to sunscreen and insect repellent, call your local Poison Center.

POISON HELPLINE

1-800-222-1222

Available 24/7/365

Free, confidential, & expert advice



Q: Are all personal insect repellents safe for all ages?

A: Infections from tick and mosquito bites are concerning. Not all insect repellents are safe for all ages. To avoid tick bites, avoid areas with tall grass and wear pants and shoes that cover legs and feet. Empty items and containers that hold standing water to reduce mosquito counts. For infants, use mosquito nets when outdoors. If repellents must be used, keep a few things in mind:

- Avoid use of DEET (N, N-Diethyl-m-toluamide) products containing with DEET 30% or higher on children 2 months of age or younger.
- Use lower concentrations if children will be outside for short periods or less than 5 hours.
- Avoid using products containing DEET more than once a day.
- DEET-containing products should be applied to exposed skin that will not be covered by clothing.
- Avoid applying to the hands and face.
- Products containing Picaridin are also effective.

1. West Nile Virus, Center for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/prevention/index.html>

2. Choosing and Using Insect Repellents, National Pesticide Information Center <http://npic.orst.edu/ingred/ptype/repel.html>

3. Applying Sunscreen and Insect Repellent Together for Maximum Effectiveness, Laborers Health and Safety Fund <https://www.lhsfna.org/applying-sunscreen-and-insect-repellent-together-for-maximum-effectiveness/>

4. Choosing an Insect Repellent Right for Your Child, Health Children.org <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Insect-Repellents.aspx>