



TIPS

To help protect your family

WHAT IS DEET?

N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, also known as DEET, is an active ingredient found in many personal repellent formulas. It is a nearly colorless liquid with a faint characteristic odor.

In 1946, The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed DEET for use by the U.S. Army. The liquid became available for civilians in 1957. Today, DEET is registered as a personal insect repellent for direct application to the skin and can be used on both adults and children when used as directed by the label.

How does DEET work?

DEET is an active ingredient found in many repellent formulas. Think of repellents as radar-jammers. Many insects, including adult female mosquitoes, are attracted to us by the odor of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) gas that we exhale. The repellent affects the scent receptors in biting insects, making it difficult for them to recognize us as a source of food.

What do different concentrations of DEET mean?

Generally, the different concentrations of an active ingredient like DEET in a personal repellent relates to different duration of the protection, not to repellency effect. Personal repellents with higher levels of active ingredient or DEET will last longer than those with lower levels of active ingredients. Always read the label and follow use instructions.

What do authorities say about DEET?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend repellents with active ingredients including DEET and Picaridin. According to the CDC, DEET provides effective and reliable protection from mosquitoes. Additionally, insect repellents containing DEET are approved for use on people when applied according to the label instructions.



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The World Health Organization and the CDC have declared DEET effective in repelling mosquitoes, including the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which may carry the Zika virus, dengue fever virus and chikungunya.