

# DEET (N,N-Diethyl-m-toluamide) Fact Sheet

DEET is used to repel biting insects, primarily mosquitos and ticks.

## DEET is found in

- Insect repellent products in many forms, such as sprays, sticks, lotions, and towelettes.

## Possible health concerns

DEET is a widely used insect repellent with very little indication of health concerns when used as directed. However, there is some information that DEET:

- May increase the potential for some pesticides to affect the nervous system if you apply DEET and spray pesticide(s) in your house or yard at the same time.

## Possible ways to reduce exposure

- Reduce your use of insect repellents by wearing long sleeves, long pants, socks, and a hat. Tightly-woven materials are more protective. Use mosquito netting when appropriate.
- Reduce mosquitos around your home and garden by:
  - Installing or repairing screens on windows and doors.
  - Emptying standing pools of water, such as in buckets, wheelbarrows, and tarps.
- If you use products containing DEET:
  - Always read and follow all directions on the label.
  - Use just enough DEET to cover exposed skin and, if needed, the outside of clothing. Using more repellent does not increase its effectiveness.
  - Apply sprays in well-ventilated areas or outside. Do not spray directly onto your face. Spray on hands first and then apply to face.
  - Do not apply on cuts or irritated skin.
  - Parents should apply DEET to children's skin. Do not apply to children's hands or allow children to handle DEET products. Do not use on infants younger than 2 months of age.
  - Wash off DEET once it is no longer needed.
  - Wash clothing sprayed with DEET before wearing it again.
- If you use both DEET and sunscreen:
  - It is generally recommended to apply sunscreen first. Follow directions on how often to reapply the two products.
  - Wash off DEET and sunscreen when they are no longer needed.

### For more information:

DEET fact sheet: [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfags/tfacts185.pdf](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfags/tfacts185.pdf)

Using repellents safely: [www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/repellents.pdf](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/repellents.pdf)

Tips for parents: [www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Insect-Repellents.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Insect-Repellents.aspx)

Tips for pest prevention: <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/pull2.pdf>