

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

Using repellents safely: www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/repellents.pdf

Tips for parents: 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>