

Sun Screen

As we get into the warmer months, many parents ask about sunscreen for their children. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- Sunscreen for ALL children over 6 months of age.
- Sunscreen should be “broad-spectrum” and protect against both UVA and UVB rays (Check the label. Most sunlight is UVA, but UVB rays cause more damage.).
- Use products with SPF 15 or higher.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours while outdoors between 10am-4pm. Reapply after swimming or profuse sweating.
- Make sure to use enough sunscreen! An average teenager should use about 1 ounce per application.
- Sunscreen works best when applied 20 minutes before sun exposure.



Babies under 6 months should rely more on shade and clothing to prevent sunburn:

- Dress infants in lightweight clothing that covers their arms and legs when they will be out in the sun.
- Don't forget a brimmed hat.
- Use canopies and umbrellas to provide shade as much as possible.
- If shade is not available, sunscreen is certainly better than sunburn. Use small amounts (SPF 15 or higher) to exposed areas, like face and hands, if necessary.



Bug Spray

During the warmer months, insects can seem to be everywhere and insect bites are pretty common. In most cases, there is no cause for alarm. Reactions are usually localized and mild and disease transmission is relatively rare, considering how often people get bitten or stung.

However, insects can carry a number of potentially serious infections like West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease. And some children can develop potentially severe allergic reactions. Still, we want children to be active and outdoors as much as they can, so we encourage families to take some easy, preventative steps:

- Avoid, whenever possible, areas where insects tend to nest or swarm. This may include bodies of standing water, uncovered garbage containers, and many flowering plants.
- When outdoors in insect prone areas, wear light clothing that covers the arms and legs.
- Do not wear strong perfumes or other scents that may attract insects.
- Don't be shy about using the "bug spray".

Insect repellants containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) are widely available and generally regarded as safe for children over 2 months of age. The AAP recommends DEET for children over 6 months. Higher concentrations do not necessarily provide better protection at their peak, but concentrations up to 30% will provide longer periods of activity. Repeated applications during the day may be associated with toxicity, so, if you are going to be out for the day in an infested area, use the higher concentration.

More recently, insect repellants containing **picaridin** (KBR 3023) have become increasingly popular alternatives. At concentrations between 5-10%, picaridin seems as effective as DEET in preventing mosquito bites, but the CDC does not recommend picaridin as a tick repellent. (See separate articles on tick bites and prevention.) Neither product is helpful against stinging insects like bees or wasps.

Finally, avoid products that combine sunscreen and insect repellent. Sunscreen requires repeated applications throughout the day, whereas repeated applications of bug spray are not recommended.

Now, get out there and have some fun!!

