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New Articles on Most Effective Insect Repellents Provide Valuable Information for Consumers

As summer nears, health experts are recommending insect repellents to help prevent mosquito and tick bites and the diseases that these bites sometimes transmit. Two new articles from a leading medical and a leading consumer publication provide more evidence about the most effective repellents.

The Journal of Travel Medicine published an article in April on insect bite avoidance measures that calls repellents a “key strategy,” noting that DEET continues to be “the gold standard” and is “the best broad spectrum repellent available for minimizing bites of mosquitoes, ticks and other biting arthropods.”

Consumer Reports’ July issue reports its testing of insect repellents. The “six top choices” it recommends are four DEET-based repellents, a picaridin product and one with oil of lemon eucalyptus. For mosquitoes, the CDC recommends DEET, picaridin, OLE (not for children under three) and IR3535. For tick protection, the only repellent recommended by the CDC is DEET (20-30% concentration).

The American Academy of Pediatrics says products containing DEET are “the most effective” repellents and should be used when necessary to protect against insect- and tick-borne disease. The AAP suggests that DEET-based repellents containing up to 30 percent DEET can be used on children as young as two months.

“These articles are excellent reminders that consumers can apply DEET-based repellents with confidence, based on a wealth of scientific data and more than five decades of consumer use,” said Susan E. Little, executive director, DEET Education Program (www.deetonline.org). “We want to remind everyone to read and follow label directions.”

About 30 percent of Americans use DEET annually, averaging 7-8 applications per person. This translates to more than 400 million applications of DEET annually.

The DEET Education Program is sponsored by Clariant Corp., S.C. Johnson & Son Inc., 3M Company and Vertellus Specialty Materials. The program operates under the auspices of the Consumer Specialty Products Association (www.cspa.org).

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