

Happy & Healthy Pediatrics

Pediatric, Adolescent, & Breastfeeding Medicine



Sun Protection and Insect Repellent

- Keep children, especially babies younger than 6 months, out of direct sunlight as much as possible. Find shade under a tree, umbrella, or the stroller canopy.
- Dress in cool, comfortable, light-colored clothing that covers the body, like lightweight cotton pants, long-sleeved shirts, and hats.
- Select clothes made with a tight weave - they protect better than clothes with a looser weave. If you're not sure how tight a fabric's weave is, hold it up to see how much light shines through. The less light, the better.
- Wear a hat or cap with a wide brim that blocks the sun off of the face. Several hats are now made with sunscreen built into the fabric.
- Limit your sun exposure between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm, when UV rays are strongest.
- Wear sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection (look for child-sized sunglasses with UV protection).
- Use sunscreen. The sunscreen we recommend is Blue Lizard baby or sensitive skin (it is the same product with a different label).

How to apply sunscreen

- Use enough sunscreen to cover all exposed areas, especially the face, nose, ears, feet, and hands and even the backs of the knees. Rub it in well.
- Put sunscreen on 30 minutes before going outdoors. It needs time to absorb into the skin.
- Use sunscreen any time you or your child might sunburn. Remember that you can get sunburn even on cloudy days. Also, UV rays can bounce back from water, sand, snow, and concrete so make sure you're protected.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours. Sunscreen wears off after swimming, sweating, or just from soaking into the skin.

Insect Repellent

The insect repellent we recommend for local use is **Natrapel**. It is DEET free and very effective. It is hard to find though in local stores so we buy it online. Consumer Report tests found 8 hours of protection against Aedes (the type of mosquitos that carry Zika) and Culex mosquitoes and 6 hours against deer tick nymphs. Can be used in children over 2 months of age.

“Proper application, and use is essential, both for maximum protection and to avoid possible side effects, including skin or eye irritation. That means:

- Apply repellent only to exposed skin or clothing (as directed on the product label). Never put it on under clothing.
- Use just enough to cover and only for as long as needed; heavier doses don't work better and can increase risks.
- Don't apply repellents over cuts, wounds, or irritated skin. When applying to your face, spray first on your hands, then rub in, avoiding your eyes and mouth, and using sparingly around ears.
- Don't let young children apply. Instead, put it on your own hands, then rub it on. Limit use on children's hands, because they often put their hands in their eyes and mouths.
- Don't use near food, and wash hands after application and before eating or drinking.
- At the end of the day, wash treated skin with soap and water, and wash treated clothing in a separate wash before wearing again.
- Some directions suggest using repellents on clothes, but most of the ones we tested damaged leather and vinyl, and some of them stained synthetic fabrics. Wash repellent off your skin and launder treated clothes.”

“Consumer reports advises skipping most products made with natural plant oils, such as California Baby Natural Bug Blend (a blend of citronella, lemongrass oil, cedar oil, and other ingredients) and EcoSmart Organic, (which includes geraniol, rosemary oil, cinnamon oil, and lemongrass oil). They did not last for more than 1 hour against Aedes mosquitoes, and some failed almost immediately. In addition, those products are not registered by the Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates skin-applied repellents and evaluates them for safety and effectiveness.”

This info provided by Consumer reports.