



INSECT BITE PREVENTION

Many travel-related diseases are spread by infected insects such as mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, or flies. Before you travel, be aware of the insects at your destination that cause disease and know their peak biting times (e.g. day vs. night) and areas (e.g. indoors vs. outdoors, rural vs. urban).

To minimize your risk, you should always take protective measures to avoid insect bites and ensure you have the appropriate preventive vaccines and/or medications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consult a health care provider or visit a travel health clinic preferably six weeks before you travel.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BITES:

1. Cover up:

- Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved, loose fitting, tucked-in shirts, long pants, shoes or boots (not sandals), and a hat; in tick infested areas, you can also tape the cuffs of your pants or tuck them inside your socks, shoes or boots.

2. Use insect repellent on exposed skin:

- In Canada, insect repellents that contain DEET or Icaridin (also known as Picaridin) are the most effective.
- Use as directed by the manufacturer.
- Make sure products are approved for use before applying to children and avoid putting repellent on their hands.
- Do not apply to cuts, abrasions or irritated skin.
- Do not spray directly on the face.
- Wash your hands after application and avoid contact with lips and eyes.

- Do not use products that contain both insect repellent and sunscreen.
- If you need to apply both sunscreen and repellent with DEET, apply the sunscreen first and let it soak into the skin for about 15 minutes, then apply the repellent.
- When travelling to areas with a high risk of diseases spread by insects, reapply repellent when required. If you are being bitten but the time span noted on the label has not ended, it is recommended that you reapply the repellent.
- If you want to minimize the amount of repellent used, apply at times of the day when insects are most active and exposure is more likely.

3. Consider your accommodations:

- Stay in a well-screened or completely enclosed air-conditioned room.
- Avoid staying in poorly constructed housing such as mud, adobe, or thatch (plant stalks or foliage used for roofing) structures.



4. Sleep under a bed net, preferably treated with insecticide:

- Make sure the net is intact (no tears).
- Tuck it under the mattress.
- Make sure it is not touching you (you could be bitten through the net).
- Use for playpens, cribs, or strollers to protect young children.

5. Apply a permethrin insecticide to clothing and other travel gear for greater protection

- Although permethrin is not available in Canada, travel health clinics can advise you how to purchase permethrin and pre-treated gear before or during your trip.
- Permethrin-treated clothing is effective through several washes.
- If treating clothing items yourself, follow product instructions carefully.
- Do not use permethrin directly on skin.

RELATED LINKS

Assistance—sickness or injury while travelling:

www.travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/sick-injured

If you get sick after travelling:

www.travel.gc.ca/returning/sick

Vaccination:

www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/vaccines