



## Travel Guard<sup>®</sup> Health Advisory

### MOSQUITO PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

Mosquitoes carry diseases that kill approximately one million people worldwide every year, making it the deadliest insect in the world. Mosquito-borne illnesses like Zika, malaria, chikungunya, dengue and yellow fever are a particular problem in the tropics, especially during rainy seasons. Examples of tropical regions are Central America and most of South America, the Caribbean, much of Africa, most of India, Southeast Asia and Indonesia. Risks of illnesses vary widely from location to location, so be sure to do your research on the particular health risks in your destination before you go.

#### Dress:

Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants. For extra protection, treat clothing with the insecticide known as permethrin. Also, keep in mind that mosquitoes are more prevalent at dawn and dusk, so try and take precautions during those times.

#### Defend:

Mosquitoes lay eggs on surfaces of containers that fill with water, and on standing water itself. Follow these tips to prevent attracting mosquitoes:

- Dump standing water.
- Female mosquitoes rest on walls and in vegetation. When possible, trim bushes, trees and grass.
- Be sure screens on doors and windows are intact to keep mosquitoes out.
- Mosquitoes breed in tree rot holes. Fill them with sand or cement.
- A tablespoon of mineral oil can kill mosquitoes in small containers.
- Pesticides including *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti) or (s) methoprene may be used to combat mosquitoes.

#### Repellents:

- DEET repellents have been used for more than 40 years by millions of people all across the globe. It is a versatile and effective insect repellent that protects you against mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, biting flies and chiggers.
- Permethrin-containing products are recommended for use on clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear – never on skin.
- Citronella is commonly used as a repellent. Protection of topically applied Citronella is short lasting. Studies show that 10% Citronella lasts less than 30 minutes.
- Bath oils can offer some protection from mosquito bites. Tests have shown that repellency lasts less than 30 minutes.
- Soybean oil can also be used. Products containing 2% soybean oil have shown repellency to last for over one hour on average.

## Here are some rules to follow when using mosquito repellents:

- Read the directions on the label carefully before applying.
- Apply repellent sparingly, only to exposed skin (not on clothing).
- Keep repellents away from eyes, nostrils and lips. Do not inhale or ingest repellents or get them into the eyes.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) suggests that DEET-based repellents can be used on children as young as two months of age. Generally, the AAP recommends concentrations of 10% or less, unless disease risk is imminent, then concentration can be increased to 30% or less.
- Many doctors feel that mosquito repellent for very young children should contain no more than 10% DEET and that no repellent should be used on infants.
- Avoid applying repellents to portions of children's hands that are likely to have contact with eyes or mouth.
- Pregnant and nursing women should minimize use of repellents.
- Never use repellents on wounds or irritated skin.
- Use repellent sparingly and reapply as needed.
- Increased saturation does not increase efficacy.
- Wash repellent-treated skin after coming indoors.
- If a suspected reaction to insect repellents occurs, wash treated skin, and call a physician. Take the repellent container to the physician.

## Protect yourself from mosquitoes when traveling:

- Always check with your doctor or a travel clinic before you travel to find out if you will be in an area with high-risk of exposure to a mosquito-borne disease.
- Get a yellow fever shot, if indicated.
- Take malaria prevention medicine, if needed.
- Use appropriate insect repellent.
- Wear proper clothing to cover your skin.
- Use bed nets to protect yourself from mosquito bites while sleeping.
- Take travel advisories into consideration.

## About AIG Travel and Travel Guard®

AIG Travel has eight strategically located assistance centers worldwide, and all medical cases are monitored and managed from one central online system. Customers are never more than a phone call away from AIG Travel's multi-lingual and multi-cultural 24/7 assistance and medical professionals.

AIG Travel, Inc., a member of American International Group, Inc., is a worldwide leader in travel insurance and global assistance. Travel Guard® is the marketing name for its portfolio of travel insurance and travel-related services, including medical and security services, marketed to both leisure and business travelers around the globe. Services are provided through a network of wholly owned service centers located in Asia, Europe and the Americas. For additional information, please visit our websites at [www.aig.com/travel](http://www.aig.com/travel) and [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com).

### Sources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/features/stopmosquitoes/index.html>
- <https://www.epa.gov/mosquitocontrol>

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