

BEATING THE BITE

BATTLE OF THE BUG SPRAY: DEET VS NATURAL ALTERNATIVE

The CDC indicates that pathogens from blood-feeding insect bites have tripled in the United States since 2004, making us vulnerable to potentially dangerous illnesses such as Lyme Disease, West Nile Virus, and Zika. (More information is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/vector-borne/index.html>.) With this increasing concern, it's important to safely and effectively prevent mosquito and tick bites. This often means exposure to potentially harmful and unsafe chemicals. Avoiding exposure is the first line of defense, but what is summer without a hike in the woods, or gathering around a campfire? There is more than one way to beat the bite!

DEET

Effectiveness

Most complete and longest-lasting protection

Duration

240 minutes or more before reapplication

Toxicity Concerns

EPA rating: Category III – slightly toxic

May be dangerous above 30% concentrations

Odor

Chemical odor

Possible Side Effects

Skin irritation, dizziness, slurred speech, swelling, nausea, seizures, neurological damage

Natural Alternative*

Effectiveness

As effective as DEET (Some studies note more effective)

Duration

120-240 minutes before reapplication

Toxicity Concerns

EPA rating: Category IV – practically non-toxic

Eye irritant if used improperly

Odor

Natural fragrance

Possible Side Effects

Minor skin irritation with sensitive skin

*Results based on the natural alternative of lemon eucalyptus oil used in a commercial application.

Choose what works for you!



Sometimes the ingredients in commercial bug sprays that are meant to scare pests away also scare parents away! Keeping your family safe means assessing what option is most effective based on location, exposure, and the outdoor activity you're enjoying.

DIY Bug-off

For the most natural option, use this basic recipe and customize with additional options such as lavender, peppermint, or cedarwood oil.

25-30 drops lemon eucalyptus essential oil
1 oz coconut oil
2 oz witch hazel

Mix, shake, and spray!



Sources: <https://naturalife.org/natural-remedies/lemon-eucalyptus-oil-natural-mosquito-repellent>
<http://reset.me/study/study-lemon-eucalyptus-oil-more-effective-than-deet-mosquito-repellent/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/vector-borne/index.html>
www.cdc.gov