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Reducing Risk of Mosquito-borne Illness While Outdoors
Guidance for School Staff: Applying EPA- Approved Mosquito Repellent to Prevent EEE

2021 is likely to be the third year of an EEE outbreak cycle in Massachusetts, and there will probably be some risk to people. However, children can continue to spend time outdoors for recess and other activities during the day with the use of repellent—as well as wearing long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when possible. Outdoor activities should be avoided between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.

EEE (Eastern equine encephalitis) is a rare but serious disease that is generally spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. **EEE can cause severe illness and possibly lead to death** in any age group; however, **people under age 15 are at particular risk.**

To reduce the chance of becoming infected, the Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends always applying an EPA-approved mosquito repellent to children before they go outside. EPA approved repellents contain DEET, permethrin, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus

Please note the following within the context of a school setting:

- Because repellents are not considered a drug or medication, they are not subject to 105 CMR 210, and thus schools are *not* limited to only those school staff who are designated by the school nurse as staff authorized to administer medications. Schools should identify staff that can:
 - follow the procedures laid out in these guidelines
 - read and understand the application instructions listed on the repellent
 - communicate with students, and
 - monitor a student to identify adverse effects, such as a rash.
- Staff should wash their hands before and after each application (do not wear gloves).
- Parents/Caregivers should be notified of any school-supplied repellent and be given the option to opt out of having repellent applied to their child.
- Parents/Caregivers can provide their own repellent to be applied to their child, however, Parents/Caregivers need to communicate with the school in regards to any repellent being sent in for their child, so that school staff may label and safely secure the repellent.
- Follow safe storage guidelines; school should store insect repellents safely out of the reach of children, such as in a locked cabinet out of the reach of small children.¹

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/using-insect-repellents-safely-and-effectively>

Using Repellents Safely

- *DEET* products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. *Oil of lemon eucalyptus* should not be used on children under three years of age. *Permethrin* products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.
- Follow the instructions on the product label. If you have questions after reading the label, such as how many hours does the product work for, or if and how often it should be reapplied, contact the manufacturer.
- **Don't let children handle the product.**
- To apply, put some on your hands first and then apply it to the child's arms, legs, neck and face.
- Don't use repellents near the mouth or eyes and use them sparingly around the ears.
- Be sure not to put any repellent on the child's hands.
- Don't apply any repellent underneath the child's clothing or facemasks.
- Don't use repellents on any cuts or irritated skin.
- Use just enough product to lightly cover exposed skin and/or clothing. Putting on a larger amount does not make the product work any better.
- If a rash or other symptoms develop and may have been caused by using a repellent, stop using the product, wash the affected area with soap and water, and contact a health care provider or local poison control center. If there is a visit to the doctor, send the product with the child.