

MAFES Dawg Tracks

February 15, 2010



Protection Against
Mosquitoes



Spring is just around the corner and when you live in the South, more especially Mississippi, we can look forward to a lot of good things happening and a few negative ones. Nut grass in our yards and gardens and mosquitoes everywhere are two negatives that I dread.

We know that mosquitoes pass blood-borne illnesses from one person to another. They are a major health hazard and are responsible for transmitting malaria, dengue fever, encephalitis and many other serious diseases. Statisticians say that infants and children are bitten by mosquitoes more than any other insect. However, I should fall into that category, as they seem to follow me everywhere in the warm seasons.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING MOSQUITOES –

- Mosquitoes are attracted to things that remind them of mammal flesh. When you're outdoors wear light clothing that covers as much of your body as possible, keeping as much of your skin and hair covered as possible. Avoid bright, floral colors. Khaki, beige and olive have no particular attraction to them.
- They are also attracted to body odors. However, not all body odors are affected; some are and others aren't. Avoid fragrances in soaps, shampoos and lotions.
- Many types of mosquitoes prefer biting from dusk to dawn. Hot and humid weather is worse for mosquitoes, so limit your outside play during the peak biting times.
- Citronella candles are good to use when kids are playing outside.
- Try to stay away from still water.
- People who are allergic should avoid vacationing in lowland areas.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends using an insect repellent on all exposed areas of skin. The most effective compound is DEET (n,N-diethyl meta-toluamide), an ingredient in most insect repellents. However, repellents containing DEET should be used sparingly on children. DEET contained problems should not be used on children under 2 months old.
- DEET should not be applied more than once each day and it should not be used in a product that combines an insect repellent and a sunscreen (so that the sunscreen can be reapplied as needed).
- For greater protection, clothing and mosquito nets can be soaked in or sprayed with permethrin, which is an insect repellent licensed for use on clothing. If applied according to the instructions, it will protect clothing for several weeks.

- Some studies suggest that taking thiamine (vitamin B1) 25mg to 50 mg three times each day is effective in reducing mosquito bites. This safe vitamin apparently produces a skin odor that is not detectable by humans, but is disagreeable to pregnant mosquitoes (Pediatric Clinics of North America, 16:191, 1969). It seems to be particularly effective with those folks who have allergic reactions. Thiamine usually takes about two weeks before the odor fully saturates the skin.
- Garlic may work the same way (except that it is detectable in humans), but there is no scientific studies to support this.

OTHER TIPS FOR AVOIDING MOSQUITO HAVENS –

- Drain Standing Water – In areas around homes or shops, take a minute and drain the water from these areas, such as pen containers around the home and around our shop areas.
- Old tires are a prime spot for collecting water and it is an ideal location for mosquito breeding territory.
- Keeping screens and doors in good condition will reduce the potential for the pests to enter our homes.
- Dead Birds – All dead birds that we see around may not be carrying the West Nile Virus, but there are other diseases that may affect them. Reporting these to your local authorities may help to combat a small outbreak or save the life if a potential carrier.

REPELLANTS FOR USE ON SKIN AND CLOTHING –

The CDC has evaluated information published in various literatures from EPA on several EPA-registered products that help people avoid the bites of disease-carrying mosquitoes. Please note below some products that contain the active ingredients that will reasonably provide long-lasting protection:

- **DEET-** Products containing DEET include but are not limited to are: Off! Cutter, Sawyer, and Ultrathon.
- **Picaridin-** Products that contain picaridin include, but are not limited to are: Cutter Advanced, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus and Autan (outside the US).
- **Oil of lemon Eucalyptus or PMD-** Products containing OLE and PMD is Repel.
- **IR3535-** Products containing IR3535 but not limited to are: Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus and Expedition. IR3535 but not limited are: Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus Expedition.

~A BITE NEGLECTED IS A BITE INFECTED~

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SAFETY IS OUR LIGHT-
LET'S KEEP IT SHINING~