

How to Choose Mosquito Repellent/Control Products

Serious diseases can be carried by mosquitoes. Once you've taken the recommended steps to reduce mosquito breeding areas, i.e., gutters, pail, used tires, etc., around your property, you may decide to purchase a mosquito product to further reduce your risk of mosquito bites. Here are a few tips to help you select the most appropriate material.

Two basic types of pesticide products with different uses

- **Repellents**—Repel adult mosquitoes
 - Apply to exposed skin and/or clothing to keep mosquitoes away from humans. Apply repellents directly to skin only if directed on the label. Some repellents are intended only for use on clothing.
- **Insecticides**—Control adult mosquitoes (biters in air) and larvae mosquitoes (wigglers in water)
 - Products for controlling *adult mosquitoes* (liquids or aerosols)—used around outdoor living areas, such as patios, pools, or decks.
 - Products for controlling *larval mosquitoes* (granules, donuts, or briquettes)—used to kill immature mosquitoes where they breed. Do not apply to deep or running water or water with fish or frogs. Note: a permit may be required for larvicides applied to waters in Maine, contact the Department of Environmental Protection.

Important: Do not use insecticides on skin or clothing.

Read and follow all the label directions

- Bring your reading glasses with you to the store because you'll need to read the product labels.
- Products with “**CAUTION**” on the label have less risk than those marked “**WARNING**” or “**DANGER**”, and require less protective equipment, such as gloves, safety glasses, or masks.
- Find the right product for what you want to do (i.e., repel or control adults or larvae). Make sure mosquitoes are listed on the label and that the directions are understandable. Use the product only where the labels says it's okay.
- If protective clothing is listed on the label, be sure to wear it when mixing or applying the product.
- Make sure you have the right equipment for applying the product. If it requires a fogger and you don't have one, *choose a different product.*
- Find the EPA Reg. No. on the label. This is like a social security number for the product. If you need more information quickly, this will get you product-specific information from the manufacturer, the Board of Pesticides Control, and/or the Poison Center

Other considerations

If you've had an allergic reaction to a repellent, *try a different type of product.* If you have asthma or other breathing problems, *avoid aerosols.*

For large areas, consider hiring a licensed professional. Contact the Maine Board of Pesticides Control for a list of professional applicators.

For more information

Northern New England Poison Center: 800-222-1222, or on the web at <http://www.nnepc.org>
Maine Board of Pesticides Control: 207-287-2731, or on the web at <http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org>
Maine Department of Environmental Protection at 287-7688 (<http://www.maine.gov/dep/>).