

SAND RUN PHARMACY

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Insect Bites: Prevention and Treatment



Summer is in full swing and with that comes insect bites. There are many options to prevent and treat bug bites.

Prevention is especially important this summer because the mosquito species known to carry the West Nile virus thrives in hot, dry climates. Around Ohio, more samples of mosquito populations are showing positive tests for the West Nile virus, including Summit County. Symptoms of West Nile include headache, high fever, muscle weakness, and confusion. More severe cases include tremors and possible coma. Follow these prevention tips to help keep you and your family safe this summer!

One of the best ways to prevent bug bites or stings is to cover as much skin as possible, wearing pants and long sleeve shirts when

in areas with many insects. You can cuff clothing around the ankles, wrists and neck to help prevent bug bites. Insects prefer dense woods or swampy areas and it is suggested to avoid those areas. Around the house, try and remove standing water, as this is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Avoiding outdoors during dawn or dusk, when insects are more active, will reduce your encounters with them.

There are also repellants that you can use to keep bugs away. DEET is a common ingredient in many repellants (eg. **OFF! Active**). These products come in many different strengths, which accounts for how often they need to be reapplied. Products with concentrations over 50% should be avoided as they have not shown to significantly increase protection. Some products now have long acting formulations that may add protection time. Regardless of the product, if you feel you are getting bit more often, you may reapply the product according to the manufacturer's label. DEET can be irritating to the skin. If irritation occurs, wash off the product with mild soap and water. If the reaction is severe, it is advised to see a physician, remembering to take the

used product with you for better treatment.

Picaridin (eg. **Cutter Advanced**) is a newer repellent that is similar to DEET but causes less skin irritation.

There are other options for repellants that include: oil of lemon eucalyptus, soybean oil, cedar oil, lavender oil, tea tree oil, thiamine, garlic, and scented moisturizers in mineral oil (such as **Skin So Soft**). Citronella candles may also be used to keep bugs away.

Combination products containing sunblock and insect repellent are available, however it is best to avoid these products since sunblock needs to be applied more frequently. It is recommended to use separate products, applying sunblock first then an insect repellent.

(continued on back)



(continued from front)

Caution should be taken when applying insect repellent to children. Children should not be allowed to handle the product. DEET and picaridin products may be used on children older than 2 months of age, however lemon of eucalyptus should be avoided as there is no safety data available for children. Kids younger than 2 months should have a mosquito net draped over their carrier.

General recommendations include the following:

- Never use over cuts, wounds or irritated skin
- Do not apply to eyes or mouth. Use sparingly around ears.
- If using a spray, do not spray directly to face or on a child. Spray the product into your hands and then apply.
- Do not use repellents under clothing
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water. This is especially important when the product is being used multiple days in a row.
- Wash treated clothing before wearing it again. This precaution varies with products, and it is recommended to check the manufacturer's label.

If you still find that you get bug bites, there are options to reduce the itching and swelling.

Local anesthetics that contain benzocaine or lidocaine (eg. Bactine) help numb the area to provide temporary relief.

Counterirritants (eg. **AfterBite, IvyDry**) reduce your skins sensitivity and can help reduce itching. They may contain ammonia, camphor, or menthol.

Topical antihistamines (eg. **Benadryl Anti-Itch Gel**) can provide some relief, however oral diphenhydramine (Benadryl) is preferred.

Topical steroids (eg. **Cortisone 10 Quick Shot, Hydrocortisone 1% Cream**) can help reduce swelling, itching, or redness associated with bug bites. These products should only be used directly on the bug bite or sting.

At Sand Run Pharmacy, we carry many of these products as well as our Good Neighbor Pharmacy brand to help save you money. We are always happy to help pick out the right product for you.



Why Do You Choose Sand Run Pharmacy?

“I will never forget the time that we needed medicine following a surgery, and Tom and Meg went the extra mile. They went to the pharmacy, after hours, and filled the prescriptions, then brought them over to our house. I don't think CVS or Rite-Aid would do that for us! It's nice to know you really have a "friend" who is a Pharmacist!”

-Robert C.

Email why you like us at rx50@aol.com!

Interesting Health Fact of the Month

Scientists estimate that laughing 100 times is equivalent to a 10-minute workout on a rowing machine.



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List of Events

August 5th
11am-6pm
Summit Mall Pet Expo

August 18th
1pm-4pm
Hardesty Park
3rd Annual Walk and Wag Against Abuse to benefit the Battered Women's Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties