

Important information

Under *Educational Childcare Regulation* (chapter S-4.1.1, r. 2), insect repellent may be applied without medical authorization to a child receiving childcare, provided it is applied in accordance with this Protocol and that a parent has given written consent.

A parent is not required to consent to the application of this Protocol. However, if a parent does not sign the authorization form, no insect repellent may be applied to a child unless the parent and a health care professional authorized by law to prescribe the medication provide written authorization.

Basic rules

Insect repellents containing DEET (also known as diethyltoluamide) must be in a maximum concentration of 10%. Products containing icaridin (also known as picaridin or KBR 3023) are also recommended, and must be in a maximum concentration of 20%. Read product labels carefully, as the concentration of DEET or icaridin may vary between products. Other insect repellents (e.g. citronella, lavender, or homemade products) are not very effective, and their effect is short-lived. Products containing DEET or icaridin should be preferred, as they are the only products that provide protection against tick bites.

Educational childcare providers may have their own insect repellent container, in which case the brand name, the type (lotion, cream, gel, liquid, spray, or aerosol), and the concentration of the active ingredient (DEET or icaridin) must be indicated on the authorization form. When purchasing insect repellents, care must be taken not to confuse the product with insecticides designed to kill insects, which must never be applied to the body. Only personal insect repellents bearing a Health Canada Pest Control Products (PCP) number as an insect repellent for use on people may be used.

To avoid confusion, it is advisable to use only one type of insect repellent unless some children are allergic to the selected product. All educational childcare providers must store insect repellents in a place out of the reach of children, away from food, medicines, and natural products. The permit holder must keep this storage space under lock and key. During outings, make sure all insect repellents are out of reach of children.

Repeated or excessive applications of insect repellent do not increase its effectiveness. It is therefore recommended to apply only a thin layer on the skin or on clothing. Avoid using these products over a prolonged period. **For children under 12, do not use products containing DEET on a daily basis for more than one month.**

Insect repellent may not be applied under any circumstances:

- on the eyes or any mucous membranes;
- on open wounds or damaged skin;
- on irritated or sunburned skin;
- under clothing;
- on the hands;
- on the face;
- in excessive quantities.

In case of contact with eyes, rinse immediately with plenty of water.

Insect repellent may not be applied to a child under 6 months old without the written authorization of the parent and a health professional authorized by law to prescribe it. At this age, children should be protected from mosquitoes using preventive measures (see section **Preventive measures**).

Given the variety of insect repellents on the Canadian market (DEET or icaridin sold under different brand names and in different forms), it is important to follow the directions for use on the product label, especially for the recommended number of applications per day, taking into account the child's age.

Basic rules (continued)

A little while before mosquitoes start spawning around spring, we recommend testing all products containing DEET or icaridin on a small area of each child's skin, to avoid adverse reactions when applied to a larger surface. To do this, apply a small amount of insect repellent to the child's skin (the size of a coin), preferably on the inside of the forearm, and wait 24 hours. Performing the test in the morning is a good way to verify the children's tolerance to the insect repellent, and to observe the result the following day.

It is important to inform parents of which day the test will take place. Should a reaction occur (redness, swelling, itching), the treated skin should be washed immediately with water and mild, unscented soap, and the parent should be informed and advised to consult a physician, taking care to provide a list of the ingredients contained in the product. The test result must be recorded in the child's file. If there is a reaction to the test, the insect repellent must not be reused on the child unless recommended in writing by a health professional authorized by law to prescribe it, and by the parents.

Insect repellent and sunscreen can be used together, provided they are not combined in a single product. When using sunscreen and insect repellent together, it is recommended to use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more, and to apply insect repellent at least 15 minutes after sunscreen application. The application of insect repellent reduces the effectiveness of sunscreens by more than 30% (Instructions for using mosquito repellent | Government of Quebec [(Québec.ca)]).

Insect repellent should be applied in well-ventilated areas, away from food.

Whenever insect repellent is applied, it must be recorded in the medication register provided for in the regulation, and the parent must be informed of the number of daily applications.

Preventive measures

The use of insect repellent is recommended during periods when mosquitoes and/or ticks are abundant, or when the surroundings of the premises are conducive to the proliferation of mosquitoes and/or ticks. Be sure to observe the following preventive measures first.

To prevent insect bites when outdoors:

Children must:

- wear long clothing that ideally fits tightly at the wrists and ankles;
- wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made of tightly woven fabrics;
- tuck their shirt inside their pants and the cuffs of their pants inside their socks;
- wear a hat and closed shoes.

You must:

- avoid using scented products;
- apply sunscreen first, and if sunscreen is required at the same time as insect repellent, wait at least 15 minutes before applying insect repellent;
- avoid going out at times of day when mosquitoes are most abundant, early morning or late afternoon.

Tips to prevent the proliferation of mosquitoes in the environment:

- Eliminate conditions conducive to insect reproduction by removing sources of standing water;
- Turn over any objects that are not stored indoors, such as boats, wading pools, gardening containers and children's toys;
- Cover outdoor garbage cans and any other container that may collect water;
- Change or treat the water in the pool or wading pool daily;
- Use insect screens in the areas where younger children play;
- Ensure that screens on doors and windows are in good condition and closed tightly. In the event of damage to a screen, quickly carry out repairs.

For children under 6 months old, avoid contact with mosquitoes by equipping strollers with safety nets and using screened verandas.

What you need to know

Products containing DEET or icaridin remain the insect repellents of choice, and are the most effective against a wide variety of insects. Those containing DEET at a concentration of 10% or less offer protection for up to 3 hours, and those containing icaridin at a concentration of 20% or less offer protection for 3 to 5 hours.

Although the safety of these products has been proven, the fact remains that they can present risks if misused, particularly for children.

Applying insect repellent to clothing (except synthetic garments or plastics) can help reduce the risk of toxicity. However, care must be taken to ensure that children do not put clothing covered with insect repellent to their mouths, touch the product with their skin, or accidentally get it in their eyes, as products containing DEET or icaridin are highly irritating to the eyes.

There are a number of pros and cons to consider when choosing a product:

- Insect repellents in lotion, gel, or cream form are generally easy to apply, but be mindful not to use large quantities;
- Insect repellents in spray or aerosol form require additional precautions. To prevent harmful inhalation, insect repellent should not be applied in enclosed or poorly ventilated areas, and must not be applied to children's faces or hands. The person applying the repellent should first spray it in the palm of their own hand before applying it to the child.

What you need to do

Insect repellent must always be applied by the person authorized to do so. Children should never apply it themselves, whatever their age.

On outings with children:

- Apply preventive measures;
- Apply insect repellent as follows:
 - 1) Read product labels carefully before application, ensuring that the DEET concentration is 10% or less, or that the icaridin concentration is 20% or less;
 - 2) Using simple words, explain the situation to the child, how the insect repellent will be applied, and the desired result;
 - 3) In a manner that the child can understand, tell them not to touch with their hands any part of their body or clothing where insect repellent has been applied, to avoid bringing their hands to the mouth or eyes, and not to chew on any clothing that may be covered with the product;
 - 4) Wash your hands with soap and water or hydroalcoholic solution **before** handling the product;
 - 5) Preferably, wear gloves for application;
 - 6) Place a small amount of product in the palm of the hand, apply sparingly and only to parts of the body not protected by clothing, or to clothing;
 - 7) Make sure the child's hands do not touch the areas where the insect repellent has been applied. Should the child touch any such area, they must wash their hands with soapy water;
 - 8) **After** applying insect repellent to all children in the group, wash your hands with soap and water or hydroalcoholic solution, even if you wore gloves when applying the product.

Upon return to the childcare provider's premises:

Upon return, or when protection is no longer required, wash all skin that was in contact with the product using water and mild, fragrance-free soap. This is particularly important if insect repellent is to be applied on several consecutive days. After, inspect the children's skin to remove any insects or ticks.

This recommendation should be passed on to parents.

Important

The parent has no obligation to provide consent for the application of this Protocol. However, should a parent not sign the authorization form, no insect repellent may be applied to the child unless the parent and a health care professional authorized by law to prescribe the medication provide written authorization. A limit may be added to the period of validity of the authorization by indicating the duration of application in the section provided for this purpose.

This revised version of the Protocol for the application of insect repellent on children who receive educational childcare services was developed with the participation of representatives from the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. The information it contains reflects the state of knowledge on the subject in 2024.

Authorization

I hereby authorize, _____
(name of the childcare centre, day care centre, person recognized as home educational childcare provider, as well as their assistant, as the case may be, or the person designated pursuant to section 81 of the *Educational Childcare Regulation*, if applicable) to apply to my child, in accordance with this Protocol, the insect repellent sold under the following brand name:

Brand name: _____

Duration of authorization: _____

Child's full name: _____

Parent's full name: _____

Parent's signature: _____

Date signed (year-month-day): _____