

Apply Mosquito Repellent During Pregnancy



— WHO —

Pregnant women, their partners, and women planning a pregnancy soon.

— WHAT —

Apply mosquito repellent (containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus) throughout pregnancy, using the product as directed.

— WHY —

Repellent use is a direct, effective, and safe way to protect a pregnant mother from the bites of a Zika-carrying mosquito, thereby lowering the risk of infecting her unborn baby.

KEY FACTS

- DEET is more than 95 percent effective in preventing mosquito bites for five to 11 hours. It is considered safe for use in pregnancy at concentrations of 30 percent or less.
- Three additional repellents—Picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus—are considered to have comparable efficacy and safety.
- When used properly, the repellents can reduce the risk of a pregnant woman contracting the Zika virus from a mosquito and passing the virus to her unborn baby.

HOW TO APPLY REPELLENT CORRECTLY

- Use only repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Homemade repellents should not be used.
- Repellents can be a lotion, cream, gel, or spray.
- Repellents come with instructions on how to use them and how often to apply them. Instructions must be followed to achieve the maximum protection.
- Apply several times a day, as indicated, and more often if sweating, bathing, swimming, or changing clothes.
- Apply repellent directly on skin that is not covered by clothing.
- Do not apply repellent directly to the face but place in one's hand and then apply to the face.
- Avoid applying repellent to delicate and sensitive areas such as the eyes, mouth, inside the nose, wounds, cuts, or irritated skin.

TIPS FOR PROMOTING REPELLENT USE

- Each repellent has its own specific instructions. Explain correct use and help users read the printed instructions if necessary.
- Emphasize that the repellent must be used consistently to be effective.
- Ask whether the user has any questions or concerns about use.
- Inform women and their families that using repellent during pregnancy will not harm the unborn baby.
- Focus counseling on the risk of Zika infection to the unborn baby as an effective way to motivate pregnant women to use a repellent.
- Advise women intending to become pregnant soon to use repellent.
- Advise families with limited repellent to give priority to the pregnant woman because Zika poses the greatest risk to the unborn baby.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2018. “Prevent Mosquito Bites.” www.cdc.gov/features/StopMosquitoes/.
- Lupi E., C. Hatz, and P. Schlagenhauf. 2013. “The efficacy of repellents against Aedes, Anopheles, Culex, and Ixodes spp. - a literature review,” *Travel medicine and infectious disease* 11(6):374-411.
- Paumgartten F. 2016. “Mosquito repellents, effectiveness in preventing diseases and safety during pregnancy,” *Vigilância sanitária em debate: Sociedade, ciência & tecnologia* 4(2):97-104.
- Wylie B.J. et al., 2016. “Insect repellents during pregnancy in the era of the Zika virus,” *Obstetrics and gynecology* 128(5):1111-5.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This PDF was produced as part of an online guide that was developed by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), a partner on the Breakthrough RESEARCH consortium. The guide draws from two Breakthrough ACTION + RESEARCH reports, “Technical Specifications Content Guide for Behaviors With High Potential to Prevent Zika” and *Zika Prevention Behavior Matrix*. Reshma Naik, program director at PRB, provided technical direction for the online guide and Lori Ashford, independent consultant, developed the content based on technical reports written by staff from Breakthrough ACTION + RESEARCH. The following Breakthrough ACTION + RESEARCH staff coauthored the original technical reports and reviewed the online guide for technical accuracy: Paul Hewett and Jessie Pinchoff of the Population Council; Martha Silva of Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; and Gabrielle Hunter, Alice Payne Merritt, and Priya Parikh of the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs. The team is grateful to Arianna Serino of USAID for her valuable input; Heidi Worley and Peter Goldstein of PRB for editorial support; Jessica Woodin of PRB for graphic design; Pamela Mathieson and N’Namdi Washington of PRB for video production; Alpha Omega Translations for Spanish translation; Mary Alice Jackson of the Population Council for Spanish review; and Automata Studios for web development. The guide is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Breakthrough RESEARCH Project (No. AID-0AA-A-17-00018). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION+RESEARCH and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH ACTION+RESEARCH

Breakthrough ACTION and Breakthrough RESEARCH are USAID’s flagship programs for social and behavior change working to increase the practices of priority health behaviors for improved health and development outcomes.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Breakthrough ACTION+RESEARCH, “Effective Behaviors to Prevent Zika Transmission Online Guide” (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2018), available at <http://www.breakthroughactionandresearch.org/zika-prevention>.

PHOTO CREDIT

USAID Project: Innovative use of the care group model with mHealth to reduce Zika virus transmission and improve community engagement response in Nicaragua

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

breakthroughactionandresearch.org/zika-prevention

