Prevent Mosquito Bites

Wear long sleeves and pants when you can. Mosquitoes can bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with mosquito repellent will give extra protection.

Use mosquito repellent, which comes in many forms: chemical, natural, or mechanical. Some are well-tested, effective, and safe for your family when used properly.

#1 RULE:
Always follow label instructions.

Sources
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends several active ingredients for insect repellents:

- DEET
- Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE) p-Methane-3, 8-diol (PMD)
- Picaridin
- 2-undecanone
- IR 3535
- Permethrin (not for use on skin)

DEET-based repellents have been around for more than 50 years and remain the standard by which other repellents are judged.

PMD is derived from the Lemon Eucalyptus tree but also can be chemically made in a laboratory. The effectiveness of PMD is comparable to DEET-based repellents.

While not every natural product will repel mosquitoes, some EPA-recommended natural oils will keep them at bay, like:

- Catnip Oil
- Lemon Eucalyptus Oil (contains only trace amounts of PMD)
- Citronella Oil

Some products containing these oils are registered with the EPA, but the effectiveness of products containing these oils depends on the concentration of the active ingredient and product formulation that prevents fast evaporation.

Direct application of an undiluted form of oil-based repellent can cause skin irritation.

Citronella candles and torches are one of the most common but least effective mosquito repellents. Geraniol, found in essential oils of many fragrant plants and a component of citronella oil, may be a better option. A 5% geraniol candle is 5 times more effective at repelling mosquitoes than 5% citronella.

When applied correctly, 10% DEET will protect you for about 2 hours, and 50% DEET will protect you for about 5 hours.

Mosquitoes bite more in the afternoon and morning.

FALSE! Mosquitoes can bite any time of night or day, especially in shade. Early mornings and late afternoons are peak biting times for day-active mosquitoes, whereas night-active mosquitoes bite more often at dusk and dawn. All mosquito types avoid sun and heat.

Mosquitoes display preferences for certain individuals over others.

TRUE! Mosquitoes are attracted to certain individuals more than others due to differences in metabolic rate and odors from chemicals produced by the human body or bacteria on the skin.

Your clothes make you more attractive to mosquitoes.

TRUE! Mosquitoes are more attracted to red, navy blue, and black colors. Darker shades are more likely to attract mosquitoes than lighter shades.