While spring has just barely sprung here in New Hampshire, it’s not too early to start thinking about mosquitoes. Typically, our mosquito season runs from June through the end of October, but it’s a good idea to be prepared early due to the risk of mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).

Several cases of West Nile and EEE were seen in New Hampshire in 2005. These are very serious illnesses as they are not treatable and there is no cure. Physicians are only able to provide supportive care. Thirty-five percent of people infected with EEE will die. Of those that survive, 35% will suffer mild to severe brain injury.

There are many steps you can take to avoid mosquito bites. Wear long sleeves and clothing to keep skin covered. Wear dark colors. Avoid being outside from dusk to dawn when mosquito activity peaks and use insect repellent at all times.

Choose insect repellent wisely. There are many products on the market, but only products containing DEET, Picardin (KBR 3023) and oil of lemon eucalyptus products should NOT be used on children under the age of three. Products containing DEET is safe to use on children over two months of age.

Children under two months of age should not be outside during heavy mosquito hours or should be protected by mosquito netting.

The amount of DEET in insect repellent varies from brand to brand. Choose a dose based on your family’s exposure risk and the length of time they’ll be outdoors.

- The maximum concentration for infants and children is 30%.
- Higher concentrations of DEET provide for longer protection, although it is not more effective than products containing less.

Generally for 3 to 4 hours of protection, use products with more than 20% DEET.
- For short periods of time, use less than 20% DEET or the alternative 7% Picaridin.
- When using repellent on a child, apply it to your own hands and then rub them on your child.
- Avoid eyes and mouths and use it sparingly around a child’s ears.
- Do not apply repellent to children’s hands as they tend to put their hands in their mouths.
- Do not allow young children to apply insect repellent to themselves; have an adult do it for them.
- Always keep repellents out of reach of children.
- Do not apply repellent under clothing. If repellent is applied to clothing, wash before wearing again.

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### DEET Protection levels:

- Products containing 23.8% DEET provide an average of 5 hours of protection
- Products containing 20% DEET provide about 4 hours of protection
- Products with 6.65% DEET provide roughly 2 hours of protection
- Products with 4.75% DEET provide roughly 1 and a half hours of protection