May 2015

Dear Eco-Healthy Child Care® Trainer:

As the weather heats up and we leave cold behind us; flowers are blooming, and insects are OUT! It’s that time of year where we take additional precaution to protect the little ones from bites and stings.

As you know repellents are effective in preventing bites by mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, chiggers, and biting flies, but have virtually no effect on stinging insects such as bees, hornets, and wasps.

Here are some helpful tips:

Try non-chemical methods:

- Dress children in clothing with long pants and long sleeves while outdoors.
- Use mosquito netting over infant carriers.
- Avoid areas where insects nest or congregate, such as garbage cans.
- Avoid clothing with bright colors or flowery prints.
- Don’t use scented soaps, perfumes, or hair sprays on children, because they are inviting to insects.
- Get rid of containers with standing water to reduce the mosquito population.

When using repellents:

- Do not use a product that combines sunscreen and repellent. Apply sunscreen first, followed by repellent.
- Do not allow children to handle repellents; apply the product to your own hands and then put it on the child.
- Do not apply to children’s hands.
- After returning indoors, wash your child’s treated skin and clothes with soap and water or bathe.
- Read and follow the label!
- Always store insect repellents safely out of the reach of children.
- As you know, using aerosols increases the amount of repellent inhaled, therefore stick to lotions or apply spray repellent in well ventilated area(s) (ie. outside)

Information on specific repellents:

- Oil of lemon eucalyptus products should not be used on children under the age of three.
- Repellents with DEET should not be used on infants less than 2 months old.
- Do not apply DEET-containing repellents more than once a day on older children.
- The child should have a bath or shower at the end of the day following DEET application.
- Use products with lowest concentration of DEET that corresponds with the time spent outdoors (DEET 10% generally lasts for about 1-2 hours while DEET 30% generally lasts about 3-4 hours).
- DEET’s effectiveness appears to peak at a concentration of 30%, which is also the maximum DEET concentration currently recommended for children.
- An alternative to DEET is a product called picaridin (KBR 3023), available in concentrations of 5% to 10%, which generally has a duration of action similar to DEET. It is less oily and does not damage plastic materials.
Please remind your providers that keeping IPM in the forefront of their work during the Spring and Summer months will help reduce the amount of insects around their facility.

Resources:

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

The U.S. EPA

The U.S. Department of the Interior

The National Pesticide Information Center: npic@ace.orst.edu
1-800-858-7378