

Mosquito bites: More than just an itch

They crash our backyard barbecues, butt in on our hikes and pester us at picnics. Mosquitoes are often seen as annoying with a bite that causes an itch. But they also can spread diseases such as malaria, dengue and Zika. Fortunately, there are ways to help you stay safe from mosquitoes and their sicknesses.



Top photo, RealPeopleGroup; bottom, Pheelings Media. Both courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on bite protection

1 One way to protect against mosquito bites is by covering your skin. Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants and a hat. Coverings are most important at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are more active.



2 The best way to keep mosquitoes away is by applying a repellent to your skin. Look for products containing DEET or picardin, as they're the most effective. Products that have oil of lemon eucalyptus are also good, but they don't last as long.

3 Be sure to use your repellent as directed on the label. If you're also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.



4 You can also prevent bites by staying indoors with screens over open doors and windows. Get rid of standing water sources in your yard, because mosquitoes can breed there.

5 If you do get bitten, apply an anti-itch cream to your skin. If redness and itchiness persist, contact your health care team.



>> For more on mosquito repellents, visit www.epa.gov/insect-repellents