



WILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Dear Parents and Guardians:

Before sending your child on any outdoor journey, please read the following from our school medical advisor. Dr. Jeanine Freliech, concerning possible exposure to deer ticks and Lyme Disease and hopefully, how best to avoid getting this disease:

“If a tick doesn't bite me, I won't get Lyme Disease.” - A.M., age 7.

Dress Defensively: The object is to keep ticks from getting on your skin and biting you. The day before the trip, spray the planned outfit with a tick repellent (see accompanying notes). Dress in light-colored and tightly woven clothing. (This makes it easier to spot ticks while the weave may make it harder for them to grab on). Wear a long-sleeved shirt (with snug collar and cuffs) tucked into long, cuffless pants. Pull your socks up over the pants and wear closed, sturdy shoes - no sandals! Wear a hat/cap to cover the hair. Check yourself frequently for ticks. If in the woodlands, stay in the center of trails, do not sit on the ground or on rock walls (but remember, ticks can be found everywhere including your own backyard!).

Upon arrival back home, brush off all skin and clothing before entering the house. Once indoors, remove clothing and spin dry, wash and again heat dry them; shower and shampoo with a washcloth, towel dry and check your child from head-to-toe for ticks (see attached comments regarding tick removal) After all, the time-tested hallmark of pediatrics is prevention!

Please help us in this extremely important and worthwhile endeavor.

Thank you,
Jeanine Freliech, M.D.
School Medical Advisor
Wilton, Connecticut

P. S. Remember to prevent, to protect, and to do a tick check. And, as always, if you have further questions, I recommend that you call your child's trusted doctor for more information and advice.

INSECT REPELLENTS

There are many choices of insect repellents on the market: those containing the chemical deet, (N, N-diethyl-m-toluanmide) are the most effective. (However, parents who prefer natural repellents or who are worried about ticks may prefer other products).

Deet – The prototype for all other repellents: it has been used for more than 40 years in adults and children. It is effective against a broad range of flying and crawling pests, including mosquitoes, fleas, gnats and ticks. Repellents containing deet are applied directly to the exposed skin. They also can be used on clothing, but may damage garments containing plastics, spandex, or synthetic materials. Deet containing repellents are available as sprays, aerosols, gels, liquids, sticks and impregnated towelettes with deet concentration ranging from 4% to 100%. (The effectiveness of the repellent rises as the concentration of deet increases).*

*** Please note: The Academy of Pediatrics states that a deet concentration of more than 10% is not considered safe in children because of potential neurological toxicity and should not be used on children younger than 2 years of age! (It is also potentially flammable).**

Permethrin – Formulated in an aerosol spray in a concentration of 0.5% (Repel Permanone Spray) for use as an insect repellent. It is applied to clothes, not the skin! Permethrin is especially effective against ticks, killing them on contact, including those that transmit Lyme disease. Combining a deet product applied directly on the skin and permethrin sprayed on the clothes provides excellent whole-body protection.

Natural products – A 2% concentration of soybean oil is the active ingredient in Bite Blocker. According to the manufacturer, this product is as effective as deet, but more studies are needed to support this claim. A relatively new product, this repellent can be difficult to find on pharmacy shelves and it may cause burning and stinging.

Naturalness is the main virtue of products containing citronella, which do not work very well though they are safe. These products include Avon Skin So Soft, Bug Guard, Natrapel Lotion or spray and Buzz Away towelette and spray.

Combination products – Joining together a deet repellent with sunscreen in a single product is not a good idea because the deet degrades the sunscreen, decreasing its efficacy by up to 30%. In addition, though frequent reapplication of sunscreen increases effectiveness, reapplication of insect repellent increases potential toxicity.

The best way to repel insect bites safely is to apply a repellent with a deet concentration of less than 10% and to avoid reapplying it. We recommend no more than one reapplication in a single day.

Table 2 lists the complete set of guidelines issued by the Environmental Protection Agency for insect repellents. "Used as directed, they are highly unlikely to cause toxicity."

TABLE I

Examples of Deet repellents for children (no endorsement):

Product	Deet Concentration
Repel Soft-Scented (gel)	7%
Skeedaddle Insect Protection for Children (packets)	9.5%
OFF! Skintastic for Kids Unscented (pump spray)	5%
OFF! Skintastic Fresh Scent (lotion)	8%
Cutter Skinsations (pump spray)	7%

TABLE 2

Guidelines for parents on how to use insect repellents safely:

- Check the label to verify that the repellent is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Read the entire label every time you use the repellent. (Young children should not apply DEET to themselves). Use the repellent only as directed by the manufacturer and only for the insects indicated.
- Keep repellents out of the reach of children. Apply only to areas specified on the label. Avoid using repellents near cuts, open wounds, or irritated skin.
- Do not apply to areas around the eyes or mouth and avoid applying to the hands of young children.
- Use just enough repellent to cover exposed skin or clothing, but avoid frequent applications and do not use under clothing.
- After returning indoors, wash repellent off skin with soap and water and wash treated clothing before wearing again.
- If you suspect the repellent has caused an adverse reaction, wash off the repellent and call the Poison Control Center.* If you go to the doctor or emergency room, take the repellent with you.

For information about the active ingredients in repellents, call the National Pesticide Telecommunications Network at 1-800-858-7378 from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., seven days a week).

*Information may also be obtained from the Connecticut Poison Control Center, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-343-2722.

RECAP!

Permethrin sprayed only on proper clothing with time allowed to dry before venturing into possible tick areas (i.e. the day before), plus Deet on the skin (never on the face or hands) should provide superior protection against ticks. However, in order to prevent Lyme disease you must protect & check. (Nothing replaces frequent tick checks during and after every journey outside from April to November or whenever the temperature is above 35 degrees Fahrenheit).