

Personal Protection from Mosquitoes

Advice to Residents

A number of measures can be taken for personal protection from mosquito bites. These fall into the following categories:

Insecticidal Aerosols containing Pyrethroid Insecticides

These quickly and effectively clear a room of insects, but do not prevent subsequent entrance of mosquitoes.

Vaporizing Mats and Mosquito Coils

A small electric hotplate on which is placed a vaporizing mat containing a pyrethroid insecticide will give up to ten hours protection inside a room. The insecticide evaporates at the temperature of the hotplate which can be supplied to run off mains electricity or off a 12v battery. A non-electric model filled with alcohol, but without flame, is available for tents or outbuildings.

Coils which smoulder and emit a pyrethroid smoke are cheaper than, but not as effective as, mats. Some people complain that the smoke causes headaches.

Nets or Curtains impregnated with Pyrethroid

Whilst a demand for nets is not foreseen, it may be of interest to know that, as well as being insecticidal, pyrethroid impregnated materials afford added protection. These pyrethroids are insect irritants and mosquitoes will not try to pass through a mesh almost large enough to fly through. Impregnated curtains are reported to inhibit entry of mosquitoes into rooms.

Repellents

Chemical repellents afford almost the only real protection against outdoor biting mosquitoes. Lotion, roll-on stick, cream aerosol and soap formulations are available from pharmacists. Di-ethyl toluamide (DEET) is the active ingredient of most, though some may contain di-methyl phthalate (DMP), ethy hexanedion, or citronella. Some people find them unpleasant and care should be taken to avoid eyes and lips.

Repellents are not long lasting on the skin. Because of these drawbacks, it may be preferable to impregnate a cotton garment with a repellent chemical. DEET impregnated netting, jackets, socks and sheets will remain effective for weeks, especially if kept in a plastic bag when not in use.

Impregnation of a garment weighing 120gms requires 30mls (= ½ pint) of water. The resulting milky liquid is poured over the garment, which is allowed to dry and then stored in an air-tight container until required. For garments of different weights, the quantities of DEET and water are changed accordingly.

Pure DEET is obtainable from the Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT.

Fly Screens

Occupants of houses subject to regular invasion by mosquitoes can derive benefit by the installation of a special fly screen in the form of a blind that is set into a frame attached to the house window frame with runners at each side to hold the cloth netting when in use. Permanent metal fly screens are also available, but as the mesh must be fine to keep out the insects, the loss of visibility rules out this method in most domestic situations.

Ultra-Violet Lights with Electronic Grids

These are less effective against mosquitoes than against flies.

Electronic Buzzers

Electronic buzzers are widely advertised for protection against mosquitoes, but have been shown to be totally ineffective. Some brands have been withdrawn after prosecution under the Trades Description Act.

Treatment for Insect Bites

Should you or your family receive mosquito bites, lesions may be treated by the application of an anti-histamine cream obtainable from chemists' shops. In severe cases, particularly involving babies or young children, a general practitioner should be consulted as treatment for anaphylactic shock may be needed.