

## Sunscreens Combined with Insect Repellent?

### Say no

Be cautious in considering products that combine ingredients, such as insect repellent and sunscreen. Because sunscreen needs to be applied liberally and often, it is better to use a separate sunscreen followed by a light application of insect repellent.<sup>1</sup> The ingredient DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) is found in most insect repellents and should not be applied more than is necessary. DEET should also be washed off once insect exposure is no longer a concern for the day.

DEET, unlike sunscreen ingredients, is not water soluble and will last up to 8 hours. "Repeated application may increase potential toxic effects of DEET."<sup>2</sup> Researchers have also reported that "the rate of DEET absorption into the skin skyrockets when DEET-based repellents are mixed with oxybenzone, a common ingredient in sunscreens. When DEET and oxybenzone are mixed, DEET absorption into the skin increases to 30.2 percent from the normal 9.6 percent."<sup>3</sup>

So, choose separate sunscreen and insect repellents that fit the needs of your family, and avoid combined insect repellent and sunscreen products for your safety. For information on how to choose an appropriate insect repellent for your family, see the Texas AgriLife Extension Service's [Insect Repellent](#).

#### Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic (2005). Mosquito bites. Retrieved May 17, 2005. From <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mosquito-bites/DS01075>.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics (2003). Follow safety precautions when using DEET on children. Retrieved May 16, 2005. From <http://www.aap.org/family/wnv-jun03.htm>.
3. Duke University Medical Center (2004). Caution urged on mosquito repellent for kids. Retrieved May 16, 2005. From <http://www.healthfinder.gov/news/newsstory.asp?docid=519866>.



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