

### Bees

Bee stings can be life-threatening for people who are allergic to them. Talk with your travel consultant at Family Medical Center or your personal health care provider if you are allergic to bee stings.

The products discussed in this brochure may not protect you against bee stings. You must be ready to manage an allergic reaction if you are stung by a bee on your trip.

### Fleas

Fleas are found on and around animals and in sand and soil. Flea bites can transmit illnesses such as typhus and the plague.

### Mosquito Nets

Buy a mosquito net to take with you on your trip. Mosquito nets repel insects best if they are treated with permethrin.

In the Seattle area, you can buy mosquito nets at REI. You may also find them at military surplus stores.

You can also buy mosquito nets and netting on the Internet. Here are some websites to check out:

- [www.mosquitonets.com](http://www.mosquitonets.com)
- [www.longroad.com](http://www.longroad.com)
- [www.travmed.com](http://www.travmed.com)

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Travel Services/Family Medical Center  
4245 Roosevelt Way N.E.  
Seattle, WA 98105  
Phone: 206-598-4055  
Fax: 206-598-5720

### Directions to Travel Services/Family Medical Center at UWMC-Roosevelt

*From Interstate 5:* Exit at N.E. 45th St. (#169). Turn right onto N.E. 45th St. Turn right onto Roosevelt Way N.E.

*Going West on State Route 520:* Exit onto I-5 north. Take the 1st exit (#169). Turn right onto N.E. 45th St. Turn right onto Roosevelt Way N.E.

*From UWMC:* Go west on N.E. Pacific St. Turn right onto 15th Ave. N.E. Turn left onto N.E. 45th St. After 5 blocks, turn left onto Roosevelt Way N.E.

## UW Medicine

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
MEDICAL CENTER

### Travel Services/Family Medical Center

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## Patient Education

Travel Services/Family Medical Center



# Insect Bites and Stings

*Tips for travelers*

**Traveling in tropical and subtropical areas puts you at risk for diseases that insects transmit. These include malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, Lyme disease, tick typhus, and Chagas disease. This brochure explains how to protect yourself and your family from *most* flying bugs.**

### Avoiding Bites and Stings

- Before you travel, learn about the feeding and nesting habits of insects at your destination.
- Take extra care or change your activities to keep you and your family safe.
- Ask your hosts about seasonal or local pests to watch for.

## UW Medicine

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MEDICAL CENTER

## Insect Repellents

Use insect repellents to reduce your risk of getting a disease from an insect. You can buy repellents in most drugstores and outdoor supply stores. They are available as lotions and sprays.

### *Lotions*

Use lotion repellents only on exposed skin. Do not use them under your clothes. Use “controlled release” formulas for longer effect.

When using both insect repellent and sunscreen, always apply plenty of sunscreen first. Wait 10 to 15 minutes, then apply the insect repellent.

### **DEET**

DEET (*N,N-Diethyl-meta-toluamide*) is the best repellent to use against ticks, mosquitoes, chiggers, fleas, and biting flies.

DEET is toxic if swallowed. You should also avoid getting it in your eyes and mouth. It can also dissolve some synthetic fabrics, leather, and painted or varnished surfaces.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advise using lotions with 30% to 50% DEET. Concentrations up to 30% are considered safe for children 2 months and older.

Concentrations greater than 50% do not give better protection, but they may last longer.

We advise using repellents with 20% to 35% DEET. Two brands to try are:

- Sawyer’s Controlled Release Lotion (20%)
- 3M Ultrathon Lotion (34%)

### **Picaridin**

Picaridin works as well as DEET, and it does not have a chemical smell. Use products with 20% strength.

### *Permethrin Spray or Liquid*

Permethrin repels and kills insects. You can buy it as a spray for clothing, or as a liquid for soaking clothing or bed nets. See product instructions for more information about how to use it and how long it lasts.

Some outdoor clothing is already treated with permethrin. Ask your outdoor clothing supplier for more information.

### **Safety Tips**

- Wear clothes that cover your skin, such as long sleeves and long pants. Keep your shirt tucked in.
- Wear shoes that cover your feet. Do not wear sandals. Wear socks to protect your ankles.
- Do not wear jewelry and bright or dark-colored clothes. The best colors are light green, tan, and khaki.
- Sleep in well-screened areas, air-conditioned rooms, or use bed (mosquito) nets.
- When at the beach or pool, lie on a chair instead of the ground. If there are no chairs, lie on a blanket or long towel.

- Do not walk barefoot.
- Never put your clothes on the ground. The scents they carry from your body may attract insects. If you take off any clothes outside, shake them well before putting them back on or taking them indoors.
- Think about soaking your clothing and bed nets with permethrin insecticide.
- Do not use perfumes, colognes, or scented after-shaves, soaps, shaving creams, or hair sprays. Use only unscented products.

## **Insects that Can Cause Illness**

### *Mosquitoes*

- Species that carry malaria and Japanese encephalitis bite from dusk till dawn.
- Species that carry dengue fever, chikungunya fever, and yellow fever bite during daylight hours.
- Use extra care around dawn and at dusk. Mosquitoes are most active then.

### *Ticks*

- Ticks burrow into your skin. They are carried on animals, but people can pick them up from brush, grass, and trees.
- If you are in high-risk areas, check your body at least once a day for ticks. Carefully check areas like your armpits, groin area, and scalp.
- To remove a tick, use tweezers or a tick remover. Pull the tick out with a slow, steady tug, at a right angle to your skin.