

- Myth: Garlic, bananas and vitamin-B can be eaten to ward off mosquitoes.** Fact: "There is no scientific evidence that eating garlic, vitamins, onions, or any other food will make a person repellent to mosquitoes," writes University of Florida scientists Jonathan Day and Roxanne Rutledge.
- Myth: New devices that emit high-frequency sounds can repel mosquitoes.** Fact: "There is no evidence that wearing devices that emit sound will repel mosquitoes," says Rutledge and Day.
- Myth: Bug zappers are effective against mosquitoes.** Fact: "Bug zappers do not control mosquitoes and can reduce the populations of beneficial insects," says Ken Gioeli, UF natural resource agent.
- Myth: Dryer sheets and other home remedies repel bugs.** False: "The truth is although many home remedies and oddball uses of everyday products do serve to repel mosquitoes somewhat, they don't work very effectively for very long," writes Barbara Mikkelson on the popular Web site, snopes.com.
- Myth: Some popular skin creams and "natural" repellent are just as effective as DEET at repelling mosquitoes.** Fact: DEET has been proven in lab and field tests to be far more effective than other products. Studies have found few repellents to be anywhere near as effective as DEET (Fradin & Day, 2002). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends only DEET and picaridin, with a limited recommendation of oil of lemon eucalyptus (www.cdc.gov).
- Myth: Many repellents work against ticks.** Fact: Only repellents with DEET at 20% or greater concentration effectively repel ticks.
- Myth: Some popular skin creams and "natural" repellent products such as those containing citronella are safer than DEET.** "DEET has been shown to be an extremely safe and effective repellent," said Lyle R. Petersen, M.D., director of the CDC's division of vector-borne infectious diseases. Day and Rutledge wrote: "Natural is a word that is sometimes used to promote 'safe' products. Unfortunately, the wording can be misleading for the uninformed individual. 'Natural' products are usually essential oils distilled from plants; oils that have evolved with plants to defend the plant from insect feeding. These oils can be toxic and irritating in high concentrations. 'Natural' repellents are not necessarily safe repellents." DEET is one of the most widely tested consumer products of any type and has been used reliably by consumers for more than 50 years.
- Myth: DEET is an insecticide.** Fact: DEET does not kill mosquitoes; it simply repels them by confusing their sensory abilities to locate humans and other mammals. According to one expert, "They go into a 'time out' for about three hours."
- Myth: DEET causes seizures in children.** Fact: There is no evidence to support this rumor, which stemmed from a few isolated cases that were never definitively linked to DEET. Experts say about 5% of children experience one or more "idiopathic" seizures, which typically disappear as they mature. "Idiopathic" means "a disease whose cause is unknown." Parents naturally seek a cause when a child has a seizure and a few have pointed to DEET use prior to the seizure. But scientific reviews have not found evidence of a causal relationship between DEET and seizures (Murphy, et al, 1997; Bell, et al, 2002). An assessment of a handful of suspected neurological cases reported over seven recent years concluded that none of the cases was likely to have been linked to DEET.