



**For Immediate Release**  
**June 13, 2005**

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### **Protect Against West Nile Virus this Summer**

*Illinois Poison Center supports CDC's recommendations to protect against infection*

(Chicago) – Experts at the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) support the recently announced Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendation regarding the use of insect repellents that contain picaridin and the oil of lemon eucalyptus. However, the IPC continues to recommend repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide). It is acceptable to use concentrations of up to 30 percent DEET for adults and children as young as two months old.

Picaridin and the oil of lemon eucalyptus have been shown to repel mosquitoes, making them useful in the fight against West Nile virus.

Mosquitoes in DuPage County, Illinois, tested positive for West Nile virus in May 2005, making it important to begin taking precautions against mosquitoes. The best way to avoid infection is to use insect repellents that reduce the risk of being bitten by virus-carrying mosquitoes. Humans can become infected with the virus through one mosquito bite. Symptoms of West Nile virus include fever, headache and nausea; more severe affects include coma, convulsions, paralysis and – in rare cases – death.

Recent studies have shown that picaridin, also known by its chemical name KBR 3023, is "often comparable with DEET products of similar concentration," according to the CDC. Oil of lemon eucalyptus, or P-menthane diol, is a plant-based repellent that provides protection time "similar to low-concentration DEET products."

"The IPC continues to advocate the use of repellents containing DEET, one of the most effective ingredients in insect repellents, due to its wide margin of safety considering the millions of applications and small number of reports addressing adverse effects," IPC Medical Director Sean Bryant said. "The new products do appear to be safe and effective options to protect consumers if used appropriately."

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## Add One -- Protect Against West Nile Virus

Consumers should use all insect repellents only as directed. Misuse may lead to poisoning. Other tips to protect against West Nile Virus and safely use insect repellents include:

- Stay indoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors, whenever possible.
- Eliminate mosquito-breeding areas around the home by removing standing water from gutters, wading pools and potted plants.
- Read and follow all directions and precautions on the insect repellent label.
- Verify that the repellent is EPA-approved. It should say so on the label.
- Use just enough repellent to lightly cover skin. Be careful not to saturate skin.
- Repellents should be applied only to exposed skin or clothing or both. Do not apply repellents underneath clothing.
- To apply a repellent to the face, dispense it into palms, rub hands together and apply a thin layer to the face.
- Do not apply a repellent to children's hands. Children are likely to put their hands in their mouths.
- After applying, wipe or wash the repellent from palms to prevent accidental contact with the eyes or mouth.

Call the Illinois Poison Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222 regarding any misuse of repellants. The IPC also handles calls regarding mosquito bites, insect stings and much more.

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**Editor's Note:** Poison center experts are available for news media interviews; contact IPC public affairs at 312-906-6146 to schedule an interview.

The Illinois Poison Center is the only certified poison center in Illinois, serving more than 12 million residents – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – via a national, toll-free number, 1-800-222-1222. Staffed by pharmacists, physicians, nurses and poison information providers, the IPC provides poison prevention information and treatment advice to the public and health care professionals on household products, medication problems, alcohol and drug misuse, bites and stings, occupational accidents and other poisonings.

The IPC is a program of the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council, an association comprising more than 140 hospitals and health care organizations working together to improve the quality of health care services in the Chicago area.