

# My patients are asking, “What is the best insect repellent to try to avoid Zika virus?”

With summer upon us we have received questions from colleagues about the best over-the-counter insect repellents to advise their pregnant patients to use.

The preferred insect repellent for skin coverage is DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) (TABLE). Oil of lemon/eucalyptus/para-menthane-diol and IR3535 are also acceptable repellents to use on the skin that are safe for use in pregnancy. In addition, instruct patients to spray permethrin on their clothing or to buy clothing (boots, pants,

socks) that has been pretreated with permethrin.<sup>1,2</sup>

—ANUSHKA CHELLIAH, MD, AND PATRICK DUFF, MD

## References

1. Peterson EE, Staples JE, Meaney-Delman D, et al. Interim guidelines for pregnant women during a Zika virus outbreak—United States, 2016. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2016;65(2):30-33.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Features: Avoid mosquito bites. <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/stopmosquitoes/index.html>. Updated March 18, 2016. Accessed May 10, 2016.

**TABLE OTC insect repellents appropriate for use in pregnancy**

Repellent	Product	Manufacturer	Notes
DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide)	Off!	SC Johnson	Preferred repellent for use on the skin
	Repel 100	Spectrum Brands	
	Ultra 30 Liposome Controlled Release	Sawyer	
Oil of lemon/eucalyptus/para-menthane-diol	Repel Lemon Eucalyptus Insect Repellent	Spectrum Brands	Acceptable option for skin use
IR3535	Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus IR3535 Expedition	Avon	Acceptable option for skin use
Permethrin	Repel Permethrin Clothing & Gear Aerosol	Spectrum Brands	For use on clothing
	Permethrin Pump Spray	Sawyer	

Abbreviation: OTC, over the counter.