

Mosquito Bite

Definition

- Bites from a mosquito

Health Information

Symptoms

- They cause itchy red skin bumps. Often, the bite looks like hives.
- Most of the time, the bumps are less than 1/2 inch (12 mm) in size. In young children, they can be larger.
- Some even have a small water blister in the center.
- Suspect mosquito bites if there are bites on other parts of the body. Most bites occur on exposed parts such as face and arms.
- Bites of the upper face can cause severe swelling around the eye or ear. This can last for several days.
- In young children (1-5 years), the swelling can be very large.

Cause

- When a mosquito bites, its secretions are injected into the skin.
- The red bumps are the body's reaction to the secretions.

Prevention of Mosquito Bites

1. General Tips:

- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and a hat.
- Mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk. Limit your child's outdoor play during these times.
- Get rid of any standing water. (Reason: It's where they lay their eggs.)
- Keep mosquitoes out of your home by fixing any broken screens.

2. DEET Products: Use on the skin.

- DEET is a very effective bug repellent. It also repels ticks and other insects.
- US AGE limit: no age restrictions for DEET products (AAP).
- Canada AGE limit: if under 6 months old, avoid DEET products (CPS).
- US: For newborns to 2 years old, use 10% DEET. After 2 years old, can use 30% DEET.
- Canada: For children 6 months to 12 years old, use 10% DEET. After 12 years old, can use 30% DEET.
- Protection: 10% DEET protects for 2 hours. 30% DEET protects for 6 hours.
- Don't put DEET on hands if your child sucks on their thumb or fingers. (Reason: prevent swallowing DEET.)
- Warn older children who apply their own DEET to use less. A total of 3 or 4 drops can protect the whole body.
- Put it on exposed areas of skin. Do not use near the eyes or mouth. Do not use on skin that is covered by clothing. Don't put DEET on sunburns or rashes. Reason: DEET can be easily absorbed in these areas.
- Wash it off with soap and water when your child comes indoors.
- Caution: DEET can damage clothing made of man-made fibers. It can also damage plastics (such as eye glasses) and leather. DEET can be used on cotton clothing.

3. Permethrin Products: Use on clothing.

- Products that contain permethrin work well to repel mosquitoes. Example: Duranon.
- Unlike DEET, these products are put on clothing instead of skin.

- Put it on shirt cuffs, pant cuffs, shoes and hats.
- Do not put permethrin on the skin. Reason: Sweat changes it so it does not work.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Everyone gets mosquito bites.
- They cause itchy red skin bumps.
- A large hive at the bite does not mean your child has an allergy.
- The redness does not mean the bite is infected.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Large Local Reactions:

- Some people react more than usual to the mosquito bite saliva. Very common in young children.
- Large local reactions start right away and keep getting larger for 2 or 3 days.
- The redness is usually over 2 inches (4 cm). It can normally be as large as 4 inches (8 cm).
- This is a harmless local allergic reaction. It is not related to severe allergic reactions.

2. Steroid Cream for Itching:

- To reduce the itching, use 1% hydrocortisone cream. No prescription is needed. Put it on 3 times a day until the itch is gone. If you don't have, use a baking soda paste until you can get some.
- If neither is available, use ice in a wet washcloth for 20 minutes.
- Also, you can put firm, sharp, direct, steady pressure on the bite. Do this for 10 seconds to reduce the itch. A fingernail, pen cap, or other object can be used.

3. Allergy Medicine for Itching:

- If itching becomes severe, give a dose of Benadryl.
- No prescription is needed. Age limit: 1 year and older.

4. Try Not to Scratch:

- Cut the fingernails short.
- Help your child not to scratch.
- Reason: Prevent a skin infection at the bite site.

5. Antibiotic Ointment:

- If the bite has a scab and looks infected, use an antibiotic ointment. An example is Polysporin. No prescription is needed. Use 3 times per day. (Note: Usually impetigo is caused by scratching bites with dirty fingers).
- Cover the scab with a Band-Aid to prevent scratching and spread.
- Wash the sore and use the antibiotic ointment 3 times per day. Do this until healed.

6. What to Expect:

- Most mosquito bites itch for 3 or 4 days.
- Any pinkness or redness lasts 3 or 4 days.
- The swelling may last 7 days.
- Bites of the upper face can cause severe swelling around the eye or ear. This does not hurt the vision and is harmless.
- The swelling is often worse in the morning after lying down all night. It will improve after standing for a few hours.

7. **West Nile Virus (WNV) - Rare:**

- WNV is a rare disease carried by mosquitoes. It can be spread to humans through a mosquito bite.
- Only 1% of mosquitoes carry WNV.
- Of people who get WNV, less than 1% get the serious kind. 80% have no symptoms. 20% get WNV fever with headache, and body aches. These symptoms last 3-6 days.

Call Your Doctor If

- Bite looks infected (spreading redness gets larger after 48 hours)
- Bite becomes painful to touch
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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