USACHPPM
Readiness thru Health

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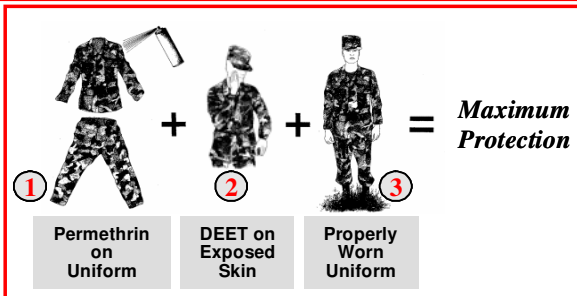
Just the Facts...

DoD Insect Repellent System

"Did you know that whenever nations send troops into battle, more troops are taken out of action by disease and non-battle injuries than are injured in combat? Many of the disease injuries result from germs passed by the bites of insects and their relatives. Don't let yourself be pestered by insects, or worse, become a casualty due to a bug-borne disease."
Armed Forces Pest Management Board



DoD Insect Repellent System

Q. How can I protect myself from being bitten by insects?

A. Help prevent the disease, pain, and annoyance caused by the bites of insects (such as mosquitoes and sand flies) and other arthropods (such as ticks and chiggers) by using personal protective measures (PPMs).

● For optimum protection, military personnel should utilize the **DOD INSECT REPELLENT SYSTEM**:

❶ Treat your uniform (ACUs, BDUs, DCUs) with the standard military clothing repellent (**permethrin**). Use the **IDA kit** (**NSN 6840-01-345-0237**). This product is a permethrin impregnation kit that contains 40-percent permethrin. One kit treats one uniform, and the treatment lasts through approximately 50 washes (generally considered the combat life of the uniform). If the IDA kit is not available, use the **Aerosol Spray Can, NSN 6840-01-278-1336**, 0.5-percent permethrin, one application of approximately ¾-can lasts through 5-6 washes. Treat your uniform PRIOR to deploying. Follow all label directions. Currently, uniforms can also be factory-treated via contract. Contact the Armed Forces Pest Management Board (AFPMB) for details.

Permethrin Impregnation Kit (IDA)
NSN 6840-01-345-0237

Permethrin Aerosol Spray Can
NSN 6840-01-278-1336
0.5% permethrin
1 application lasts through 6 washes

Examples of Commercial Equivalents

33% Controlled-Release DEET Lotion: NSN 6840-01-284-3982
1 application protects up to 12 hrs
Highest rated skin repellent (Consumer Reports, May 2003)

❷ Apply a thin coat of the standard military skin repellent (**DEET**) to all areas of exposed skin. Use **NSN 6840-01-284-3982**, 33% controlled-release DEET lotion, one application protects for up to 12 hours depending on the climate. Follow label directions.

❸ Wear your uniform properly; it acts as a physical barrier against insects. Wear the sleeves rolled down. Close all openings in your clothing that might provide access to insects: tuck pants into your boots, and undershirt into your pants. Wear your uniform loosely, because some insects, such as mosquitoes, can bite through fabric that is pulled tight against the skin.

● **These DEET and permethrin products are the most effective repellents available and they have proven safety records.**

Q. What else can I do to protect myself from insects while in the field?

A. ● Sleep or rest under a bed net. Some insects, such as sand flies, are much smaller than mosquitoes and may fit through the mesh of the net. In addition, mosquitoes can bite *through* the mesh if the net drapes against your skin. Therefore, it is important to treat the bed net with permethrin for added protection. Erect the net over your cot so that there are no openings. Light-weight, self-supporting, pop-up bed nets are also available. They have finer mesh openings than the traditional net, and are already treated with permethrin at the factory.

Light-Weight, Self-Supporting, Pop-Up Bed Net
- OD Green (Camouflage) **NSN 8415-01-516-4415**
- Coyote Brown **NSN 8415-01-518-7310**

● Take malaria prophylaxis pills if you are directed to do so by the medical authority. There are no vaccines to prevent malaria.

● Do not use after-shave lotion, cologne, perfume, or scented deodorants/soaps while in the field. They may attract insects.

● Wash and inspect your body for insects and their bites daily, or as often as the tactical situation permits. Use the buddy system to check your clothing for crawling pests (e.g. ticks). Wash your uniform routinely to remove insects and their eggs.

It's DoD policy

Q. Am I required to use the DoD Insect Repellent System?

A. Yes. It is military policy that the DoD Insect Repellent System and other personal protective measures (PPMs) be utilized by service personnel when they are in situations where insect exposure is likely. In December 1998, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed that PPMs be utilized during all deployments. In October 2001, the Army incorporated PPMs into its basic training (Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks, Skill Level 1, STP 21-1-SMCT). And, in April 2002, the Under Secretary of Defense requested that PPMs be included in the basic training manuals of all the military services. The Armed Forces Pest Management Board's (AFPMB) Technical Guide No. 36, "Personal Protective Measures Against Insects and Other Arthropods of Military Significance," provides detailed information about the DoD Insect Repellent System and other PPMs. In addition, most Operational Plans/Orders include utilization of the DoD Insect Repellent System/PPMs.

Q. Can I use DEET with camouflage face paint?

A. Yes. Camouflage face paint that already has DEET incorporated into it has recently become available – order **NSN 6840-01-493-7334** (New CFP with DEET, 12 compacts per box). Otherwise, apply standard military DEET lotion to the skin first, followed by regular camouflage face paint.

Q. Can I use DEET with sunscreen?

A. DEET can be used with sunscreen, but it may reduce the duration of effectiveness of the *sunscreen*. To minimize this effect, apply sunscreen approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour prior to applying the DEET so that the sunscreen has time to penetrate and bind to the skin first. Sunscreen does NOT reduce the effectiveness of the DEET.

Q. What else should I know about DEET and permethrin repellents?

A. ● Use DEET only on exposed skin – do not apply underneath clothing. Only a thin, even coating of DEET is necessary – a larger quantity does *not* work better. A DEET concentration greater than 50% is *no* more effective. The 33% controlled-release DEET lotion (standard military skin repellent) works the best because its unique polymer formulation allows the DEET to work for a longer period of time than other products. Avoid the eyes and lips, and do not apply over cuts or sunburned, or otherwise injured skin.

● Use permethrin only on clothing, netting, tents, ground cloths or other gear. Do NOT treat underwear or the inside of the cap. Permethrin has no odor once the item of clothing is treated. Do NOT dry clean permethrin-treated garments as solvents will remove the permethrin. Treated garments can, however, be personally or professionally laundered, starched, and pressed as usual. Getting the treated uniform wet from rain or by fording streams, etc. will not affect the treatment.

Q. Are there any products I should avoid?

A. Do NOT wear animal flea and tick collars – they are harmful to human health and have unproven effectiveness. Non-DEET repellents (such as those containing citronella), or other products not registered as repellents by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are not as effective as DEET and may not be any safer. Avoid practices such as eating match heads or yeast tablets because they have not been shown to be effective.

Q. Can I use repellents if I'm pregnant?

A. Yes, especially if you will be exposed to disease-carrying insects. Although it is wise to exercise a cautious approach when pregnant (e.g. try to avoid situations where disease-carrying insects may be present, use repellent sparingly, and wash off and discontinue use when insect exposure has ceased), there is no convincing evidence that DEET or permethrin, when used in accordance with label directions, will have an adverse effect on the mother or fetus. Conversely, insect-borne diseases such as malaria can be very harmful to both mother and fetus. Therefore, the CDC recommends that pregnant women, who are traveling to any area where they may be exposed to insect-borne diseases, use the same protective measures as non-pregnant travelers. The CDC indicates that these measures include covering up with clothing, applying DEET (up to 50%) to exposed skin, using a bed net, and applying permethrin to both clothing and bed nets.

Q. Who can I contact if I have questions about the DoD Insect Repellent System or other PPMs?

A. Contact the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine: DSN 584-3613, CM (410) 436-3613, http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil; or the Armed Forces Pest Management Board: DSN 295-7476, CM (301) 295-3613, http://www.afpmb.org.