

Effective Tick, Chigger and Mosquito Control Measures

Throughout spring, summer and well into late fall, unwanted pesky insects find their way into our landscapes, campgrounds, sporting venues and even inside our homes. These uninvited, winged guests are single-minded when it comes to their human prey. From the low flying ticks and chiggers to the high-flying mosquitos; all are relentless and can be bothersome with their bites. For example, ticks can permeate tight, protected spots that lie between our skin and clothing. Once they bite, their enzyme-filled saliva becomes irritating and itchy. Mosquitos, on the other hand can quickly land or light on our exposed skin multiple times before we are even aware of their presence. Chiggers can be the worst bites of all three of these pests.

Despite the many ways these pests can breach our personal spaces, there are just as many ways that we can protect ourselves. Some methods require the use of chemicals that can be applied in a broad space and others are applied topically and do not require the use of harsh chemicals. Below are ways to protect you from these so-called no-see-ums.

- If the weather is not too hot, consider wearing a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and socks.
- Treat clothing with permethrin or purchase pre-treated clothing. If clothing is pre-treated, it will retain the repellent for multiple washes. Repellent used on skin can also be applied on clothing but only for a shorter length of time and must be reapplied after washing.
- Apply lotion, liquid, or spray repellent to exposed skin. This is important for use in the garden during early morning hours or late evenings. Some low-cost, effective products include Avon Skin So Soft (original) and Picaridin (Cutter Advanced, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus).

For Ticks

- Make certain to wear long-sleeved clothing and ensure that your pants and shirts are tightly wrapped to your ankles, waist, wrist, etc.
- Check your entire body and remove attached ticks promptly.
- Shower within 2 hours of being in a tick-infested area.

For Mosquitoes

- Ensure adequate protection during times of day when mosquitoes are most active.
- West Nile mosquitoes bite mainly from dusk to dawn.
- Use common sense and make certain to reapply repellents as protection wanes, typically after 3-4 hours of initial application.
- When traveling, place nets over your bed when accommodations are not adequately screened. If nets do not fall to the floor, tuck them underneath the mattress.

For Chiggers

- Use an insect repellent containing DEET and apply permethrin to boots, backpacks, clothing, etc.
- Wear tightly woven fabrics.

- Stay on the trail. Chiggers hang out in high vegetation and will immediately cling to your body when you walk through their territory.
- Avoid chigger-infested areas. Some places are simply chigger-bound. Avoid the areas that have high vegetation.
- If you think you have wandered into a chigger-infested area, get out of the area and wash yourself immediately with hot soapy water.

Awareness is the key. When you know that you are going to be in these areas during certain times of the day that are prone to chiggers, misquitoes and/or ticks, come prepared and shield yourself from these tiny predators and allow yourself to enjoy nature and your surroundings.