**Protect Your Travel Investment by Protecting Your Skin**

While most travel to sunny destinations go off without a hitch, it’s important to take common sense precautions on everything from your personal safety to preventing bug bites, particularly from mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes don’t have to take a bite out of a vacation. With some simple precautions, travelers can protect themselves and have a safe, enjoyable trip.

Both the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) offer the same advice for anyone going to areas where mosquitoes are common: use the right insect repellent and wear the right clothing.

When used correctly, insect repellent offers the best protection from mosquito bites, according to the CDC. If you’re using sunscreen, and you should, apply that first and then the insect repellent. While there are products that combine the two, the CDC doesn’t recommend them since repellent isn’t usually reapplied as often as sunscreen.

The CDC recommends choosing a product that contains one of several active ingredients including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535. They’ve all been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and provide safe protection. According to the CDC, you can find those ingredients in brands such as Bug Guard Plus, Cutter, Off!, Sawyer, Skin So Soft, Repel, Skin Smart and Ultrathon.

There are a few things to keep in mind when using repellent. Don’t spray it on your skin underneath your clothing and remember to reapply it every few hours. Be sure to spray the repellent into your hands first before putting it on your face, and use just enough to cover exposed skin. Use it sparingly around the ears, and be sure to avoid applying it to your eyes or mouth. It’s also worth noting that a heavy application won’t give you better or longer-lasting protection. At the end of the day, wash treated skin with soap and water, or bathe.

Make sure you bring enough repellent with you, since there’s no guarantee you’ll be able to find it at your destination. And remember, federal Transportation Security Administration regulations limit the size of aerosol cans you can pack in your carry-on luggage, so you’ll want to put anything larger than 3 ounces in your checked baggage.

To further reduce the risk of bites, both the CDC and WHO recommend covering exposed skin, especially during the daytime when mosquitoes are usually most active. That means wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and hats in light or neutral colors. Also, make sure you’re staying and sleeping in screened or air-conditioned rooms. Keep the screens, doors and windows closed to eliminate ways that mosquitoes can enter.

Since mosquitoes can bite through thin clothing, the CDC suggests getting an extra layer of protection. You can buy boots, pants and socks that have been pretreated with the EPA-approved insecticide permethrin, which binds to the fabric and helps kill or repel insects. You can also treat your own clothes with permethrin, and they’ll keep their protection after multiple washings. (Just remember not to use it directly on the skin. It’s for gear and clothing only.)

Finally, if you are bitten, avoid scratching mosquito bites and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce itching.

For help planning a vacation anywhere in the world, contact us today.