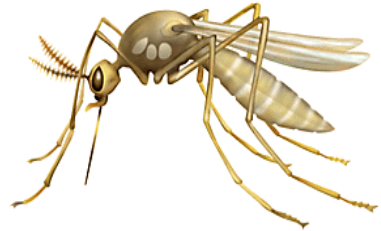


Hey! A Mosquito Bit Me!

What a Mosquito Is

A mosquito (say: mus-**kee**-toe) is an insect that is found all over the world. There are thousands of different kinds of mosquitoes in many different sizes and colors. The female mosquito needs blood from vertebrates (animals that have a spine) to lay eggs and produce more mosquitoes. She has a special part of her mouth that she uses to suck blood, and her saliva (spit) thins the blood so she can drink it. In fact, it's the mosquito's saliva that makes the bites itch!



What a Mosquito Bite Looks and Feels Like

A person who gets bitten by a mosquito will notice a **wheal**, which is a bump around the bite. The wheal will be round, with pink or red around the edge and white in the middle. The wheal will itch a lot. Soon the wheal will disappear, but the itch will stay.

What You Should Do

If you think you've been bitten by a mosquito, wash the bite with soap and water. Put on some calamine lotion to help stop the itching, or an adult can find an anti-itch cream at the drugstore for you. Placing an ice pack on the bite will also help. Tell an adult you've been bitten by a mosquito, especially if you live in the eastern United States.

What a Doctor Will Do

It's **very** unusual for someone to have an allergic reaction to a mosquito bite. But if you develop an allergic reaction and feel dizzy or sick, tell an adult immediately. A doctor can treat allergic reactions with medicines.

How to Avoid Getting Bitten

The best way to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes is to wear an insect repellent. Ask your mom or dad to apply one that contains 10% to 30% DEET. When it's possible, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants outside.

Since mosquitoes lay their eggs in water, it's also a good idea to empty out buckets, flower pots, toys, and other things in your yard that may have collected water during a rainstorm.

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