

## **Dodge Zika Naturally: 6 DEET-Free Bug Sprays That Actually Work...**

by Casie Terry [liveinthenow.com](http://liveinthenow.com)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released its latest Zika virus warnings, and it's not pretty. And while Zika is certainly dominating the mosquito-related headlines, West Nile remains a concern. In 2012, reported cases West Nile Virus were the highest seen since 2003, and related deaths exceeded the highest seen since 1999, the year the virus was first detected in the U.S. At the end of 2015, the CDC reported that 1,455 cases of West Nile virus have been reported, including 142 deaths. As concern continues to spread over the CDC's recent reports on cases of Zika and West Nile virus, prevention is at the top of everyone's mind. While some people do tend to attract more mosquitoes and bugs than others (myself included), due to their body temperature or carbon dioxide output, everyone carries the risk of finishing a relaxing summertime walk with large, red itchy welts. But are conventional insect repellents the only effective solution?

Why you shouldn't reach for the conventional bug spray

Conventional bug repelling sprays and lotions often contain toxic levels of N,N-Diethyl-metoluamide (DEET), a chemical that most bugs find repulsive. Unfortunately, DEET has been shown to have adverse health effects when used in high quantities. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported 14 to 46 cases of potential DEET-related seizures and 4 deaths, confessing, "... it does appear that some cases are likely related to DEET toxicity." While some countries regulate insect repellents to contain no more than 30% DEET, there is no concentration limit for products sold in the U.S., meaning, some conventional insect repellents may contain up anywhere from 50 percent to 100 percent DEET. Do I really have to douse myself in chemicals to ward off bug bites? Of course not! Luckily, there are other, all natural scents and oils that bugs find repulsive. When these are applied topically, you can bet even the most determined mosquito will bug off. In fact, I can personally confirm that these work. I'm typically a mosquito magnet, but so far this year I haven't gotten more than two. My secret? Every morning I've been spritzing myself with a homemade lavender mist. Much to my surprise it's working like a charm. Rather than risk absorbing and inhaling the toxic chemicals from conventional repellents, consider one of these great all natural alternatives.

6 DEET-Free Bug Spray Brands That Actually Work (do a web site search by brand name)...

1. Bite Blocker Organic Insect Repellent Spray at [Homs.com](http://Homs.com)
2. All Terrain Herbal Armor DEET-Free Natural Insect Repellent at [AllTerrainCo.com](http://AllTerrainCo.com)
3. Tick Tock Naturals Organic Insect Repellent at [TickTockNaturals.com](http://TickTockNaturals.com)
4. Loving Naturals Organic DEET Free 4 oz Insect Repellent at [LovingNaturals.com](http://LovingNaturals.com)
5. Bite Blocker Insect Repellent – Herbal Repellent Wipes at [BiteBlocker.com](http://BiteBlocker.com)
6. EcoSMART Insect Repellent at [EccoSmart.com](http://EccoSmart.com)

### **Why Homemade Bug Spray?**

article from: [WellnessMama.com](http://WellnessMama.com)

At my house, we joke about mosquitoes being the size of birds, and they certainly do seem to come in flocks! Especially with small children who are prone to scratch mosquito bites, keeping them away is a top priority. Also a priority is avoiding chemicals like DEET, which are present in many commercial insect repellents. According to Green Your Body: One of the most widely used ingredients in store-bought conventional bug sprays for personal use is N,N-Diethyl-m-toluamide, or DEET, as it's commonly known. DEET, which is designed to repel, rather than kill,

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insects. DEET is used by an estimated one-third of the US population each year. Although DEET is approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), it is a known eye irritant and can cause rashes, soreness, or blistering when applied to the skin. Additionally, DEET has been linked to neurological problems; according to the EPA, at least 18 different cases of children suffering adverse neurological effects, as well as the deaths of two adults, have been associated with DEET. Researchers at Duke University Medical Center have found that DEET causes diffuse brain cell death and behavioral changes in rats. DEET has been shown to have a negative impact on wildlife and water sources in production and during use. DEET is toxic to birds and aquatic life. DEET has been found in approximately 75 percent of U.S. water sources, including the Mississippi River. As with practically every household item, natural bug spray can be made inexpensively and naturally at home. (Some of our other favorites to make instead of buying are deodorant and toothpaste). This recipe takes just seconds to mix up and can be varied based on what you have available. I've included several variations so you can try whichever one you have the ingredients for.

Essential Oil Bug Spray Recipe... This recipe uses essential oils, which are highly effective, but there are some concerns about putting these directly on the skin, especially on children. I prefer to use this recipe on clothing or gear instead of directly on the skin.

Homemade Bug Spray Ingredients...

Essential oils: choose from Citronella, Clove, Lemongrass, Rosemary, Tea Tree, Cajeput, Eucalyptus, Cedar, Catnip, Lavender, Mint  
Natural Witch Hazel  
Distilled or boiled Water  
Vegetable glycerin (optional)

Homemade Bug Spray Instructions...

Fill spray bottle (I used 8 ounce) 1/2 full with distilled or boiled water  
Add witch hazel to fill almost to the top  
Add 1/2 tsp vegetable glycerin if using  
Add 30-50 drops of essential oils to desired scent. The more oils you use, the stronger the spray will be. My personal favorite mix is: Rosemary, Clove, Cajeput, Lavender, Cinnamon and Eucalyptus. It works great and smells good too!

How to Make Bug Spray From Dried or Fresh Herbs...

Fresh or Dried Herbs Bug Spray Ingredients...

Distilled water  
Witch hazel or rubbing alcohol  
Dried herbs: peppermint, spearmint, citronella, lemongrass, catnip, lavender, etc.  
(I recommend using at least one herb from the mint family.)

Fresh or Dried Herbs Bug Spray Instructions...

Boil 1 cup of water and add 3-4 TBSP of dried herbs total in any combination from the above.  
I use 1 TBSP each of peppermint, spearmint, catnip and lavender, and also throw in a couple of dried cloves.  
Mix well, cover and let cool (covering is important to keep the volatile oils in!)  
Strain herbs out and mix water with 1 cup of witch hazel or rubbing alcohol. Store in a spray bottle in a cool place (fridge is great because then it's nice and cool).  
Use as needed. Added bonus: it smells great and is very refreshing to the skin.  
TIP: If you have the time and want to make a stronger version of this recipe, prepare the herbs in an alcohol mixture as a tincture instead and use this directly as a spray after straining out the herbs.

### Super Strong Insect Repellent Recipe...

Fair warning: this stuff stinks when it is wet, though the smell disappears as it dries. It works incredibly well though, and this is the one I use when I'm going to be in the woods or in tick infested areas. It is based on a recipe that was supposedly used by thieves during the Black Plague to keep from getting sick. They used it internally and externally to avoid catching the disease and to keep the flies and other pests away. According to legend, it worked and they survived... but it definitely makes a great insect repellent these days! Its also very inexpensive to make and you probably already have the ingredients in your kitchen.

#### Vinegar of the Four Thieves Insect Repellent Ingredients

- 1 32 ounce bottle of Apple Cider Vinegar
- 2 TBSP each of dried Sage, Rosemary, Lavender, Thyme and Mint
- At least quart size glass jar with airtight lid

#### How to Make the Vinegar of the Four Thieves Insect Repellent...

Put the vinegar and dried herbs into large glass jar.

Seal tightly and store on counter or place you will see it daily. Shake well each day for 2-3 weeks.

After 2-3 weeks, strain the herbs out and store in spray bottles or tincture bottles, preferably in fridge.

To use on skin, dilute to half with water in a spray bottle and use as needed.

Use whenever you need serious bug control!

Note: This mixture is very strong and has antiviral and antibacterial properties. It can also be used as a tincture for any illness. For adults, dose is 1 TBSP in water several times a day, for kids over 2, dose is 1 tsp in water several times a day.

#### Other Simple Insect Repelling Ideas

Use a non-toxic, plastic-free insect-repelling band (I love this one), which is easier to use on children and very effective.

Add vanilla extract to either of the above recipes, or just rub on the skin. You can also mix vanilla with witch hazel and water for a spray version.

Plant insect repelling herbs in your yard. I grow lavender, thyme, mint and citronella near our patio and we use these fresh plants as bug repellent in a pinch.

Rub lavender flowers or lavender oil on your skin, especially on hot parts of body (neck, underarms, behind ears, etc.) to repel insects.

Rub fresh or dried leaves of anything in the mint family all over skin to repel insects (peppermint, spearmint, catnip, pennyroyal, etc or citronella, lemongrass, etc.) Basil is also said to repel mosquitoes and I've used fresh basil leaves in the garden with great success before.

#### Store Bought Natural Insect Repellent Options...

There are now also some good natural insect repellent options available to purchase if you don't have all of the ingredients on hand or want a simpler solution. Some of the ones that I have personally tried and liked are:

- Yellow Bird Insect Repellent (natural and made in the US)
- Babyganics natural insect repellent (listed as safe for use on children)
- Herbal Armor (allergy tested)

What are your tricks for keeping bugs at bay? Which do you think is worse... the insects or the chemicals in most repellents? Let us know at [WellnessMama.co](http://WellnessMama.co)