



INFO

From our mosquito experts

MOSQUITO ATTRACTANTS: WHY PESTS MIGHT BE PICKING ON YOU

Mosquito season typically occurs from late spring to early fall in the continental U.S. This is when mosquito activity is highest and it may seem like mosquitoes are drawn to some people more than to others. Speculations about the potential causes of mosquito attractants range from differences in blood types, hormones, skin care products or diets we follow.

The entomologists and scientists at the SC Johnson Institute of Insect Science for Family Health in Racine, Wisconsin indicate it all comes down to biology – when considering what makes some people more “attractive” to mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes don’t care about the sweet summer beverages we drink, they’re drawn to chemicals in the air we exhale and the sweat on our skin.

“Carbon dioxide is the primary chemical that mosquitoes are detecting, and we emit carbon dioxide every time we exhale,” said Julie Palm, a researcher at SC Johnson. “They use the carbon dioxide as a way to detect humans up to 50 feet away. As they get closer, they’ll begin to use other cues like sensing lactic acid.”





INFO

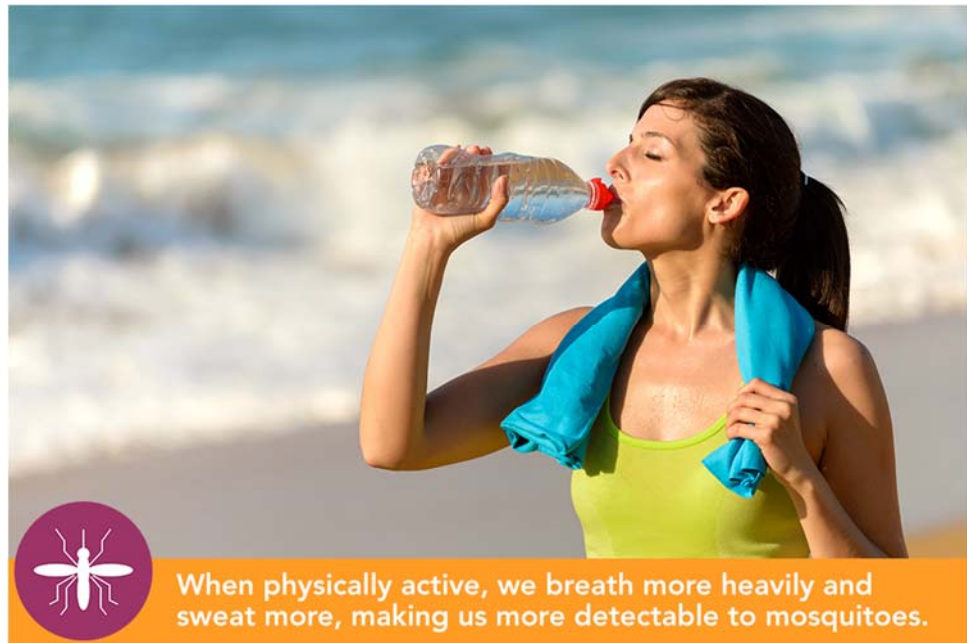
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Mosquitoes can sense the lactic acid that humans secrete through the skin, sweat and even subtle body movements. Mosquitoes can also detect any areas of the body where personal repellent hasn't been applied, especially if emitting a higher level of these substances.

When we are more physically active, we are likely to breathe more heavily and sweat more intensely, thus making ourselves more detectable to mosquitoes.

“Our breathing patterns, body temperature and tendency to sweat can vary depending on where we are and what we're doing, so in any given circumstance, the same person could be more or less 'attractive' to mosquitoes,” said Tom Mascari, a researcher at SC Johnson. “It's important to be aware of these factors, but the best way to make sure you're protected is to apply personal insect repellent across all exposed body parts.”

Your blood type, what you ate for dinner the night before, your age, your gender or any scented products you use on your body are not going to be the factors that attract mosquitoes to you. Carbon dioxide, lactic acid, water vapor and body heat are the main players. In addition, elevated body heat may be the reason some pregnant women are more “attractive” to certain mosquito species.



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To combat some of these mosquito attractants, our Entomologists recommend using personal repellents that contain EPA-approved active ingredients, like DEET or Picaridin, to avoid mosquito bites. Products with these ingredients are designed specifically to create a vapor barrier on the skin's surface that deters mosquitoes from landing on the skin or biting us.