

Safest and Most Effective Products for Children

The safest strategy for children relies on choosing **Icaridin (Picaridin)** for their skin and **pre-treated clothing** for their gear. [1, 10]

1. The Safest Skin-Applied Repellent: Icaridin (20% Concentration) [10, 11, 12]

Public health authorities, including the Public Health Agency of Canada, recommend Icaridin as the first-choice defense for kids aged 6 months to 12 years. It is highly effective against ticks, does not irritate sensitive skin, and is completely non-greasy. Unlike DEET, it will not damage plastic sunglasses, synthetic clothing, or gear. [10, 13, 14, 15]

[Care Plus Baby & Kids Insect Repellent](#)

This kid-safe, unscented formula provides up to 12 hours of reliable tick and mosquito protection. It is approved for use on toddlers and infants aged 6 months and older. [16, 17, 18]

2. The Safest Clothing Option: Factory Pre-Treated Permethrin Clothing [19]

While you can buy sprays to treat your own clothes, doing so creates an accidental exposure risk around children while the liquid is wet. The safest option for children is purchasing clothing that has been professionally pre-treated by a factory. [3, 20, 21]

- **Insect Shield Apparel:** Brand clothes pre-treated with [Insect Shield Technology](#) bind the permethrin tightly to the fabric fibers. It keeps the insecticide away from their skin while automatically killing ticks that crawl up their socks or pants. *(Note: Avoid permethrin-treated clothing for very young toddlers who still frequently chew or suck on their sleeves and pant cuffs.)* [1, 22]

Safety Rules for Kids

- **Age Limits:** Never use any tick repellent on babies under 6 months old. Avoid Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD on children under 3 years old. [7, 10, 23, 24]
- **The "Hands" Rule:** Do not apply spray to a child's hands. Kids constantly rub their eyes and mouth, which can cause severe chemical irritation. [1, 8, 25, 26, 27]
- **Application:** Spray the repellent into your own hands first, then wipe it onto your child's exposed face, neck, and limbs. [1, 8]

Parents may ask themselves the following, to assist in further defining the needs for their children.

- What are the **ages** of your children?
- What specific **outdoor activity** are you preparing for (e.g., backyard play, summer camp, or deep-woods hiking)?