

★ GENERAL REPELLENT GUIDELINES ★

Insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin or OLE, also known as PMD are the most effective. As a general rule, the greater the percentage of the active ingredient, the longer the product will remain effective.

- ★ Always follow instructions on the label.
- ★ Choose a repellent with an appropriate concentration of DEET, picaridin or OLE to match the length of time you are outdoors.
- ★ Apply directly to skin (except face) and spread evenly with hands.
- ★ For face application, apply first to hands and then spread evenly on face, avoiding mouth and eyes.
- ★ Repellents will not be as effective if applied sparingly to the skin.
- ★ Reapply repellent according to the label.

★ PROTECT YOUR BABY OR TODDLER ★

Where possible, avoid exposing your child to March flies. Consider staying indoors, using pram netting or dressing them in loose, long-sleeved clothing, socks and shoes.

Repellents for children

- ★ **Under 12 months** – repellents containing DEET, picaridin or OLE are not recommended.
- ★ **From 12 months** – repellents containing up to 10% DEET, picaridin or OLE can be used.

Application guidelines for children

- ★ Do not allow children to apply repellent.
- ★ Apply repellent firstly to the hands of the carer and then spread evenly to exposed skin of child.
- ★ Avoid applying repellents to hands, near the eyes or mouth.
- ★ Do not apply repellent under clothing.

★ AVOID BEING BITTEN ★



COVER UP

- ★ Wear long, light-coloured, loose fitting clothing.
- ★ Avoid wearing blue and other dark coloured clothing as they are known to attract March flies.
- ★ Avoid tight fitting clothing as March flies can bite through them.
- ★ Dress babies and children in suitable clothing, including shoes/socks and use bed or pram nets.



REPEL

- ★ Apply an effective insect repellent, containing diethyltoluamide (DEET), picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), also known as para-Menthane-3, 8-diol (PMD), evenly to all areas of exposed skin.
- ★ Apply and re-apply repellents according to the label instructions.

For more information

Contact your local government Environmental Health Officer or the Department of Health or visit

healthywa.wa.gov.au/marchflies

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★ FIGHT *the* BITE ★

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MARCH FLIES



★ COVER UP AND REPEL ★



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of Health

★ WHAT ARE MARCH FLIES ★

March flies can be a serious pest to humans, livestock, domestic animals and wildlife. They are annoyingly persistent when attempting to bite and their bites can be very painful. In some cases, people can suffer severe allergic reactions. There are more than 200 species in Australia and they are sometimes known as horse flies or tabanids.

Where do March flies breed?

March flies breed in places such as damp soil, rotting vegetation, sand and rot holes in trees. Their life cycle from egg to adult can take months or years depending on the species and soil temperature.

Adults generally live for 3 to 4 weeks.

Where are March flies found in WA?

March flies can be found anywhere in Western Australia (WA) but are more common in warmer climates.

Despite the name, March flies are present all throughout the warmer months in southern WA and year-round in northern regions of the State.

When are March flies most active?

Adult March flies are most active in daylight during the warmer months, particularly on calm, sunny days. In the tropics, they may continue to be active through the drier winter months.



★ HEALTH IMPACT OF MARCH FLIES ★

March flies are not known to transmit diseases to humans or livestock in Australia. Their bite, however, can cause serious allergic reactions in some people which may require hospitalisation. Livestock can suffer severe blood loss from repeated biting.

One species found in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of WA appears to produce serious symptoms in some people, including severe localised swelling, intense itching, hives, fever, wheezing, and in more serious cases, anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions).



Severe cases of allergic reaction should be reported to the [Department of Health](#).

What medical treatments are available?

Applying an ice pack or using a mild antihistamine may offer relief from painful bites. Severe, painful swelling may require further medical assistance and use of steroidal anti-inflammatories. Scratching the bites can result in an infection that may require the application of antiseptic cream or the use of antibiotics.

Patients with a severe allergic reaction should seek urgent medical assistance and advice.

Can March flies be controlled?

It is generally not possible to control March flies using large scale pesticide applications. This is due to the extensive size of their breeding areas and ability to travel long distances.

★ AVOIDING MARCH FLIES ★

Houses and workplaces

- ★ Ensure insect screens are installed and in good condition.
- ★ Swat or use insecticide spray if March flies are present indoors.
- ★ Fly traps may be useful for reducing March fly populations. Dark coloured boards coated with a permanently sticky adhesive have been used with some success. Other commercial traps are also available for purchase online.

Travelling and camping

- ★ Ensure insect screens are installed and in good condition on tents and caravans.
- ★ Utilise screened shelters and avoid areas where March flies are active.
- ★ Cover up and use an effective insect repellent.



Photo courtesy of MDA Lindsay.