



OUTWARD BOUND CALIFORNIA

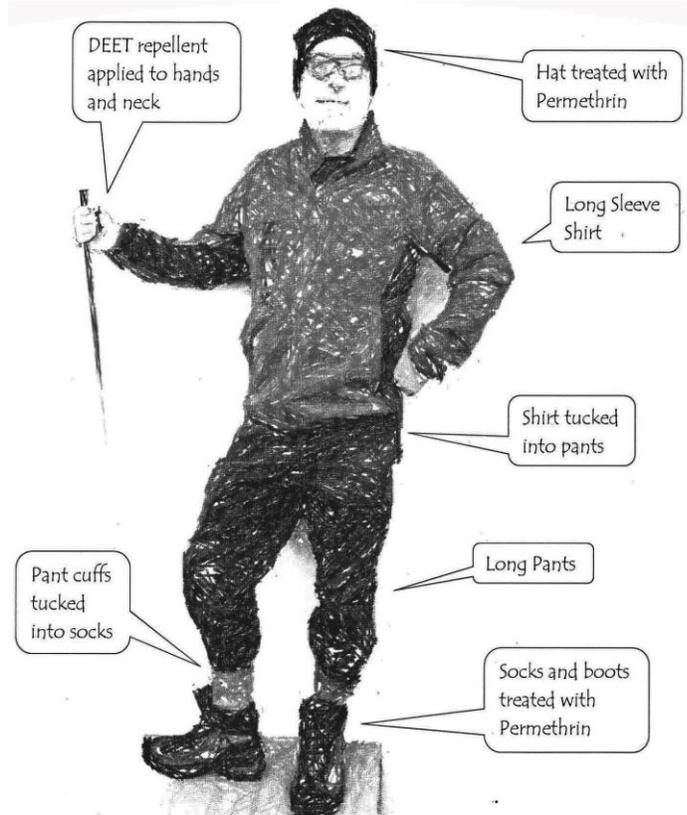
PRE COURSE INFORMATION GUIDE: Vector Bites

Your child is about to take part in a transformational experience and the outdoors is their classroom. As they enter this new environment, they will learn new skills and gain new knowledge about the risks they might face. One risk that we face in recent times in North America is the transmission of vector-borne illnesses (most commonly transmitted through mosquitoes and ticks). Outward Bound wants to educate and protect against vector-borne illness transmission. Despite California's documented low probability of vector transmission, you should be aware that there is no complete protection from a mosquito or tick bite, or the illnesses they may transmit, whether you are in the wilderness or in your backyard.

The most important thing you can do to prevent mosquito and tick bites is to prevent them from reaching the skin. The CDC and State Departments of Health recommend insect repellent with up to 50% DEET which can be applied to the skin to repel ticks and mosquitos and most other vectors. Outward Bound will provide DEET products for student use on every course as well as inform students of other preventative measures and best practices. You may include additional products with your child if preferred.

Additional information on vectors, vector-borne illnesses and their prevention can be found on the CDC (Center for Disease Control), WHO (World Health Organization), and the California Department of Health websites. Additionally, consult with your doctor about travel to this course area.

Potential prevention of vector bites includes one or more of the following:





POST COURSE INFORMATION GUIDE: Vector Bites

As explained in the pre-course materials, the wilderness environments in which we operate our courses are sometimes home to a variety of vectors (e.g., mosquito, rodent, tick and flea). Our instructors are trained in vector bite prevention, including frequent tick checks, prudent avoidance of vector habitats and frequent application of insect repellent containing DEET. Your child was also educated on vector identification and bite prevention. Nevertheless, it is still possible for a mosquito to find skin to bite or for a tick to hitch a ride on a student's clothing and eventually become embedded into the skin, even on the trip home. If a tick is removed quickly and correctly, there is little cause for concern. If you find a tick or your child reports that they have been bitten by a tick on course, pay attention to signs and symptoms of infection and/or a rash.

The concern with vectors, ticks in particular, is that they can transmit Lyme and similar diseases after embedding in a person's skin for an extended amount of time. Less than 5% of ticks in California have tested positive for Lyme Disease. Research suggests that the sooner a tick is removed intact will further lower the chance that any disease that a tick may carry will be transmitted. Attention and careful checking when your child returns to the privacy of your home is an important step in assuring that they have no embedded ticks. If you do find a tick embedded, you should pull it out with narrow tweezers, grasping the mouth parts as close to the skin as possible and applying slow, steady pressure directly away from the skin. If the tick is not embedded, and still crawling, it can be removed easily by hand and discarded.

If the tick is believed to have been embedded more than 24 hours, you should follow up with a health care provider and let them know that your child has had an embedded tick and the area in which the expedition occurred. Some providers recommend prophylactic antibiotics. Others suggest waiting until signs and symptoms are present. Signs and symptoms can include a red, target-like rash and symptoms resembling the flu: low grade fever, body aches, joint pain, swollen glands. Ticks should be treated with seriousness and care, but should not cause undue concern unless symptoms appear.

Additional information on vectors, vector-borne illnesses and their prevention can be found on the CDC (Center for Disease Control), WHO (World Health Organization), and the California Department of Health websites. Consult your physician promptly if you don't feel well, and please do not hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns.

