

Dear Outward Bound Participant,

You are about to take part in a transformational experience and the outdoors is your classroom. Outward Bound uses the challenges inherent in the wilderness to reveal a student's perseverance, boldness, and compassion. As you enter this new environment, you will learn new skills and gain new knowledge about the risks you might face in this new environment - Outward Bound has been leading programs since 1941.

One risk that we face in recent times in North America is the transmission of Vector-borne (most commonly mosquito and tick) illnesses. Outward Bound wants to educate and protect against vector-borne illness transmission. We are working hard every day to educate our students on barrier protections for vectors, but 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. You should include this if it is mentioned on your packing list. Insect repellent containing DEET will also be supplied on all courses where there is a significant chance of vector-borne illness transmission. If your packing list notes it, Outward Bound also recommends that all student clothing be treated ahead of the course with Permethrin - commonly available and safe to use as a fabric application that repels and kills most vectors on contact. Outdoor clothing pre-treated with Permethrin is available from companies such as [BugBeWear](#), [L.L. Bean's No Fly Zone](#), [ExOfficio's BugsAway](#), and [Cabela's Insect Defense](#). Two methods for treating your own clothing are to send clothing away to [Insect Shield](#) or to treat it yourself at home with a spray-on Permethrin solution available from [Sawyer](#) or [Repel](#).

Additional information on vectors, vector-borne diseases, and their prevention can be found on the CDC, WHO, Public Health Ontario and the Minnesota or Wisconsin state department of health websites. Additionally, consult with your doctor about travel to this course area.

You will be on expedition in Minnesota, Canada, and/or Wisconsin where the State Department of Health warns that there are several vectors to be aware of: mosquitos, black-legged ticks, American dog ticks, and other less common types of ticks. Some vectors may be capable of transmitting West Nile Virus, LaCrosse Encephalitis, Jamestown Canyon Virus, Lyme's disease, Abaplasmosis, Babesiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis, Powassan Virus, Tularemia, and Swimmer's Itch. Outward

Bound staff will work with you throughout your course to maintain Outward Bound's standards of safety against vector-borne illness.

Sincerely,

Suellen Sack
VOBS Director of Safety

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

