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### Be it fresh, forest floors, or hot, sodden swamps...

that creepy crawly on your pillow is only there because you are! Nonetheless, unwanted company on a camping trip can extend a little further than just the obnoxious family in the campsite next door questioning Dad's awning. Let's just say that you'll want to be a fly on the tent wall for this week's episode of the Snowys Camping Show.

Outdoor experts Lauren and Ben discuss the best ways to both avoid and repel the four most common creepy crawlies in the Aussie outdoors. Get to know the insects that leave you itching, the critters that like to cling, and the bugs beneath the bark: mozzies, midges, leeches, and spiders.

### Shortcuts:

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### Mentioned in this Episode:

#### Products:

- [St John First Aid for bites and stings](#)
- [Mosquito head nets](#)
- [Oztent Screen House Hex](#)
- [Mosquito bands](#)
- [Mosquito Click](#)
- [DEET repellent](#)
- [DEET-free repellent](#)
- [Citronella candles & coils](#)
- [Battery-Operated Mosquito Repellent](#)
- [Thermacell](#)
- [Permethrin](#)
- [ItchFix Soothing Gel](#)
- [Outdoor Snake and Spider First Aid Kit](#)



[Orange lighting options](#)

**Blogs:**

[Spider Safety article](#)

## **Mosquitoes**

From lactic acid to floral fragrances, mozzies are drawn to various substances on our skin. With naturally existing ammonia and Type O blood, deodorants and dark clothing also attract these tiny terrors – be it their sweet, floral aroma, or the warmth absorbed by your t-shirt activating their heat sensors.

## **Pick Your Campsite Carefully**

From muddy marshlands to placid pools, avoid setting up your campsite near stagnant water, mangroves, or waterholes. Dark, damp, still spaces close to dense bushland are also a breeding ground for mozzies, and an unsuitable base camp for backpackers who want to beat the bite!

Even so, a water source undoubtedly offers a sense of security on any off-road adventure. When camping near water is unavoidable, simply keep within your tent walls when mozzies are most active during dusk and dawn.

## **How to Manage Mosquitoes When Camping**

Light-coloured clothing reflects sunlight and therefore reduces heat, which would otherwise attract mosquitoes. As well as this, wearing long sleeves and pants will cover perfumed skin and further help to deter them.

For evening antics and family charades beyond the mesh, simply apply a repellent like DEET with another mode of protection such as a mosquito coil, citronella candle, Thermocell, mozzie zapper lantern, or orange lighting.

An invisible dome of protection, the Thermacell works as a butane canister which, when lit, heats an inbuilt pad and disperses mist across your campsite. Note, a still environment will likely allow for the mist to diffuse more adequately and evenly.

Where mozzie zappers serve as an attract-and-kill device using a bright blue-white beam of light with an electric shock, the warmer glow of orange lighting deters bugs as well as provides muted light after dark.

Like a helmet without the heavy, or a safety net without the fall – mosquito head nets or mesh screen rooms allow relief from relentless insects. Outside the tent, mesh domes also offer a separate sanctuary in an open, outdoor environment so you can eat, drink, and hang out without bothersome bugs! Before travelling off the beaten track, examine all equipment for damaged mesh screens and replace if necessary to ensure ultimate defence against those dusk demons!

Other relief methods include silicone mosquito wristbands, battery-operated mosquito repellents, and residual insecticide treatment such as permethrin. Whilst the citronella oil impregnated in the wristbands helps repel the bugs by the BBQ, the battery-operated mosquito repellent emits a soundwave frequency that stuns and deters mosquitos, chemical-free. Lastly, DEET-free permethrin treatment can be applied to camping apparatus such as



tents, swags and shelters instead of the skin, repelling mozzies from your rustic refuge.

## Treating Mozzie Bites

It's one thing to be bitten beneath the awning, it's another to tolerate the irritating itch that follows. To reduce the swelling of a mozzie bite, apply a cold pack to the area, and avoid scratching by using a Mozzie Click instead. This device inhibits histamine production via piezoelectricity, by extension reducing inflammation and irritation.



*For evening antics and family charades beyond the mesh, simply apply a repellent like DEET.*  
Image: Bushman

## Midges

Prolific in the tropics and sub-tropics, these persistent, provocative, and humidity-loving pests are a tiny 1.5mm – 4mm in length! Like mosquitoes, you'll find them by the water and laying their eggs in soggy soil, decaying leaf matter, and muddy areas. Midges are mostly active at daybreak and dusk, but can also be dynamic during the day in overcast conditions. If a single midge bite isn't painful enough, these insects also tend to swarm, threatening a blanket of blistery bites!

## How to Manage Midges When Camping

Picture this – your dog is whimpering at the front door after dark, begging to be let back in just to be near you. Shortly, he devotedly curls up on the doormat after deciding he'll wait to see you in the morning.



Yeah...midges aren't that cute.

At such a small size they're capable of squeezing through anything – be it minor gaps in zips, holes in mesh, or tears in fabric, let alone open-door panels as you come and go from your shelter. As suggested for mozzies, choose campsites far from midge breeding grounds, avoid exposing yourself during their most active periods, and keep all shelters, havens, and internal spaces fully closed. Loose, light-coloured clothing will also help protect exposed skin from these bothersome bugs, and either DEET or picaridin will deter them.

While giving it a good scratch may offer temporary relief, this will only exacerbate a midge bite more. Instead, apply an ice pack to reduce the swelling or consider antihistamines to mediate symptoms.

## Leeches

At first glance, leeches are eerie, slimy, sinister looking critters – but despite their distressing nature, they don't cause pain or harm to the body. That said, while leeches alone are innocent, the open wound from their bite is at risk of infection.

Like mosquitoes and midges, leeches are often found in wet, damp, and more sodden spaces nearby stagnant waters. Beyond base camp, they're more likely to be a concern for hikers navigating their way along trails, over creek crossings, or through long grasses.

To avoid these pathetic pests pretending to be vampires, simply cover exposed skin with long-sleeved shirts and pants, and further repel with DEET.

## Removing Leeches

When faced with a fat, beastly leech on your leg, it's likely that your first response would be to slap, pull, or flick it away. This fast, fickle method can cause further damage to the surface of your skin.

Instead, the recommended way to remove the parasite is to locate the head at the thinner end of the body, pull your skin taut, slide your fingernail towards its mouth, and scrape it away.

Like any stage-five clinger, leeches will eventually find their way back to you – to avoid reattachment, remove the suction area of its mouth. Lastly, clean the wound with alcohol or a first aid cleanser before bandaging with sterile material to stop the bleeding.

If you've seen *A Bug's Life*, you may remember the scene where the slug foams at the mouth from too much salt – this serves as inspiration for another method of removing blood-sucking brutes like leeches. Applying salt to a leech will remove moisture from its body, causing it to shrivel, shrink and fall away from your skin.

## Spiders

Sliding your foot into a grubby gumboot, reaching into a crevice for a fallen trinket, lifting a solid stone or tree stump, or stumbling mid-hike into a hammock of strong, stringy web – chances are, you've trespassed on a spider's territory at some stage.

Spider species span from state to state, so it's wise to be aware of the dangerous varieties living in the areas you're exploring. Before bundling away your belongings, shake out any loose sheets and shelters, tip over any open canisters, and tap the base of any footwear



sitting free from your set-up. Avoid leaving shoes outside at night, and ensure your shelter is fully closed – leaving no gaps between the zipper toggles.

## **Preparing Your First Aid Kit for Spider Bites**

Spiders build their sanctuaries in all sorts of nooks, crannies, and hidey holes. When pulling up to the campsite, chances are you've cushioned that caravan tire atop a spider's property – so it's best to be prepared!

Treatment for both Funnel-Web spider and snake bites are similar, where both involve applying a pressure bandage to slow the spread of the venom – such equipment should be included in your First Aid kit before hitting rural roads.

First Aid modules for snakes and spiders are also available for reference in worst case scenarios, and St Johns detail the necessary precautions and directions to take on their website. That said, keep in mind the most likely scenario when innocently tapping that tent peg into an arachnid's asylum – that spider is as terrified of you, as you are of it!

## **Thanks for listening, tune in again for next week's episode!**

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If you have any questions for Ben and Lauren, make sure you head over to our [Facebook group](#) and let us know as we'd love to hear from you.

Catch you out there!