

Kite Patch makes you invisible to mosquitoes

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Singapore: California-based start-up Olfactor Laboratories has developed a sticker, Kite Mosquito Patch, that the company claims can make wearers virtually invisible to mosquitoes for up to 48 hours.

Hampering the host-seeking behavior of mosquitoes, the Kite Mosquito Patch, which can be stuck on the clothing, reportedly uses non-toxic compounds that prevent mosquitoes from detecting carbon dioxide exhaled by us, thus, preventing mosquitoes from finding their human blood meals.

The project is especially targeted at helping curb mosquito-borne diseases. Kite Patch was designed to replace products using ineffective or toxic chemicals, and also to provide protection for individuals throughout an individual's normal daily activities and 24-hour cycles.

Kite's technology stems from scientific developments initially developed at the University of California, Riverside with assistance from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health.

"When you wear Kite, the product makes you practically invisible to mosquitoes," said Dr Michelle Brown, the project's chief researcher, in a fund-raising campaign video on Indiegogo. "And we've been able to accomplish this using food-grade FDA approved compounds, removing the need to use toxic and dangerous chemicals that are currently found in today's products," she added.

Due to a successful Indiegogo campaign, the project has already raised more than 500 percent of its goal, Kite will soon begin a six-month pilot program in Uganda. The Indiegogo campaign is focused on sending 20,000 Kite patches for large-scale testing in Uganda, where malaria rates are over 60 percent. Some 660,000 people died of malaria in 2010, mostly in Africa, according to the World Health Organization.

"For more than half of the world's population, primarily in Africa, South East Asia and South America, effective mosquito control means the difference between life and death," said Kite creative lead Ms Torrey Tayenaka in the Indiegogo video. "Despite continued international efforts, a child dies from malaria every minute of every day," she added.

"This science could very well change the game in the international community's fight against malaria, dengue, West Nile, and other deadly diseases," said Dr Michelle Brown in a press release. "There is no silver bullet. However, we are confident that our work to make humans invisible to mosquitoes will be transformational in the broader war against mosquito-borne diseases," she added.