

Insect Bites and Stings

First Aid Treatment



Biting and Stinging Insects

- VENOMOUS:
 - Wasps
 - Hornets
 - Yellow Jackets
 - All Bees
 - Fire Ants
- NON-VENOMOUS:
 - Chiggers
 - Fleas
 - Lice
 - Scabies
 - Bed Bugs
 - Ticks
 - Mosquitoes

Symptoms of Bites and Stings

<u>SYMPTOMS</u>	<u>VENOMOUS</u>	<u>NON-VENOMOUS</u>
Itching	Sometimes	Always
Pain	Always	Uncommon
Allergic Reactions	Common	Rare
Swelling or redness	Intense	Mild or absent

The Differences Between Bites and Stings

- The differences are due to the nature of the bite or sting. Venomous insects attack as a defense mechanism, injecting painful, toxic venom through their stingers to punish you so you'll stay away next time.
- Non-venomous insects bite and usually inject anti-coagulant saliva in order to feed on your blood.
- Although local irritation and "allergic" reactions do occur from non-venomous bites, severe reactions such as anaphylactic shock only happen from venom stings.
- When honey bees sting, they leave the stinger and venom sack attached.
- Venom continues to pump in through the stinger until the sack is empty or the stinger is removed.
- The only good part about this is that honey bees die after they sting.
- Wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets don't leave their stingers, thus can sting you over and over.

Local vs. Systemic Reactions

- Venomous stings are always very painful, red, and swollen up to 12 inches around the sting site.
- This is called a **local reaction**. In sensitive individuals, a **systemic** or "whole body" reaction occurs, with redness, hives (itchy raised skin lumps), and swelling far away from the sting site.
- These systemic reactions can progress to involve the airways and circulation and may be life-threatening. Obviously it's important to know the difference between local and systemic reactions.
- Biting insects generally aren't dangerous because allergic reactions are extremely rare.
- True, they do spread diseases like Lyme, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, encephalitis, and malaria, but for most of us their bites just cause terrible itching.

Avoiding Stinging Insects

- Don't wear perfume or scented lotions.
- Control odors at picnics, garbage areas, etc.
- Avoid brightly colored clothing outdoors.
- Destroy or re-locate all known hives or nests near your home.

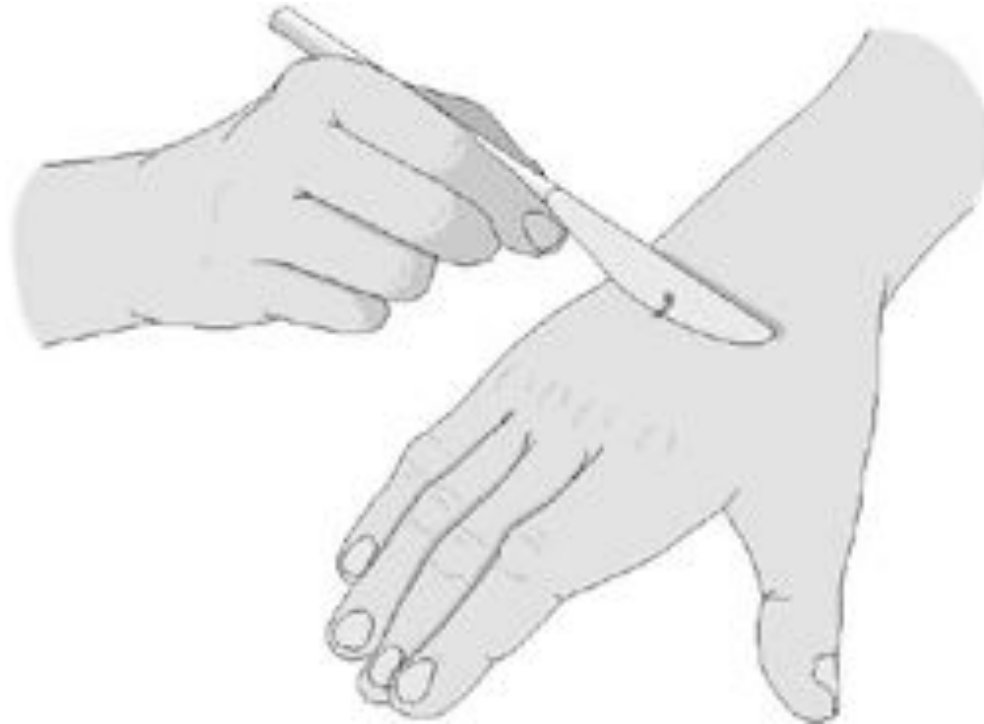
Avoiding Mosquitoes, Chiggers, and Ticks

- Cover as much of your skin as possible with clothing, hats, socks, etc.
- Pay special attention to cuff areas at ankles, wrists, and neck.
- Avoid swamps (mosquitoes), dense woods, fields, and brush (ticks, chiggers).
- Examine exposed skin and scalp areas for clinging ticks after returning from hikes.
- Use insect repellent.

Treatment of Stings

- First, the stinger must be removed (see diagram on next slide).
- Pain, swelling, and itching are the main complaints.
- Home remedies include baking soda or meat tenderizer compresses to "draw out" or destroy protein-based venom. Scientific data is lacking with these techniques, but they do make logical sense.

**Remove stinger with a knife edge or Credit Card by Scraping.
Do not pull with fingers or tweezers**



Treatments

- After removing stingers if they are present, wash area thoroughly with soap and water
- Apply hydrocortizone-type creams if they are available
- Motrin or other anti-inflammatory medicines are also helpful
- If the reaction is **SYSTEMIC**, get them to a doctor right away