



July 2017

Insect Bites and Stings

Along with summer sun and fun comes increased exposure to insect bites and stings. Here is what you need to know to identify and treat them.



Venomous insects attack and sting as a defense mechanism. They inject painful, toxic venom through their stingers to punish you so you'll stay away from them. They include wasps, hornets, yellow jackets, bees, fire ants and scorpions.

Non-venomous insects bite and usually inject anti-coagulant saliva in order to feed on blood. Examples include chiggers, fleas, lice, scabies, bed bugs, flies, ticks, and mosquitoes.



Although local irritation and "allergic" reactions do occur from non-venomous bites, severe reactions such as anaphylactic shock only happen from venom stings.

Signs & Symptoms of a Bite or Sting result from the venom, anticoagulant or other substances injected into the skin. How severe the reaction is depends on your sensitivity to the venom or substance of that insect and whether you've been stung or bitten more than once.

Characteristics of Bites and Stings

Symptom	Non-Venomous	Venomous
Itching	Always	Sometimes
Pain	Uncommon	Always
Swelling / Redness	Mild or absent	Can be intense
Allergic Reactions	Rare	Common

Types of Reactions

Local Reaction: Most reactions are mild and localized, causing nothing more than an annoying itching or stinging sensation and mild swelling. These symptoms occur immediately and disappear within a day or so.

Allergic Reaction: In sensitive individuals, an allergic (systemic, or "whole body") reaction occurs. Symptoms are delayed and may include fever, hives, painful joints and swollen glands.

You might experience both the immediate and the delayed reactions from the same insect bite or sting.

In some people, the systemic reactions can progress to involve the airways and circulation (**anaphylaxis**) and may be life-threatening.

First-Aid and Treatments

Mild Reactions:

1. Quickly remove the stinger and venom sac.

- **Flick the stinger out** with your fingernail or
- **Scrape it out** with something available, like a stiff piece of paper, butter knife, or credit card.
- **Don't pinch** the stinger or venom sac - that can inject more venom.

2. Wash the area with soap and water.

3. Control Swelling.

- **Apply a cold pack** or cloth filled with ice to reduce pain and swelling.
- **Elevate** the affected area if possible.
- **Remove** tight-fitting jewelry from the area of the sting. As it swells, rings or bracelets might be difficult to remove.

4. Treat Symptoms.

- **Try an over-the-counter pain reliever**, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) to ease pain.
- **Apply a topical cream** to ease pain and relieve itching. Ingredients such as hydrocortisone, lidocaine or pramoxine may help control pain. Calamine lotion or creams containing oatmeal or baking soda can help soothe itchy skin.
- **Take an antihistamine** containing diphenhydramine (Benadryl) or chlorpheniramine maleate (Chlor-Trimeton).

5. Follow-Up.

It might take 2-5 days for the area to heal. Keep it clean to prevent infection.

Nutrition Nook

Watermelon is a heavyweight in terms of nutrients. A two-cup serving has:

- ♦ a third of a day's vitamins A and C
- ♦ a nice shot of potassium
- ♦ a healthy dose of lycopene



Severe Allergic Reactions to Insect Stings

See your doctor promptly if you experience any signs or symptoms of an allergic reaction. Symptoms may include mild nausea and intestinal cramps, diarrhea, or swelling larger than 4 inches in diameter at the site.

Call 911 immediately if the person has any of the following symptoms **or** a history of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), even if there are no symptoms:

- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- tightness in the throat or a feeling that the airways are closing
- swelling of lips, tongue, throat or face
- anxiety
- hoarseness or trouble speaking
- confusion or loss of consciousness
- skin that severely itches, tingles, swells, turns red or develops hives
- nausea, abdominal pain, or vomiting
- a feeling of faintness or dizziness

Take these actions immediately while waiting for medical help:

- ◆ **Check for medications** that the person might have available to treat an allergic attack, such as an auto-injector of epinephrine (EpiPen, Twinject). Administer the drug as directed—usually by pressing the auto-injector against the person's thigh and holding it in place for several seconds. Massage the injection site for 10 seconds to enhance absorption.
- ◆ **Loosen tight clothing** to prevent restriction in case of swelling.
- ◆ **Cover the person with a blanket** to help keep them warm and prevent shock.
- ◆ **Don't give anything to the person to drink.**
- ◆ **Turn the person on his or her side** to prevent choking.
- ◆ **Begin CPR** if there are no signs of circulation, such as breathing, coughing or movement.
- ◆ **Follow-Up:** Make sure someone stays with the person for 24 hours after anaphylaxis in case of another attack. A person should always go to the ER after an epinephrine injection, even if the symptoms subside.



Nutrition Tip: It's Not Just What You Eat, it's When

A new scientific statement from the American Heart Association suggests that certain diet habits show promise in helping to prevent heart disease and related conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and obesity. These include:

Intermittent fasting - Studies suggest severely limiting your calorie intake one or two days per week may help with weight loss and reduce triglycerides, blood pressure and insulin resistance. "We've known for a long time that calorie restriction can delay the onset of age-related conditions and diseases. Now we have newer data on intermittent fasting and time-restricted feeding that's dramatic and promising" says Mayo clinic's Nathan LeBrasseur, Ph.D.



Meal timing - Some studies suggest that people who consume most of their calories late in the day have a higher risk of obesity and heart disease.

Research has found that consuming 50 percent of daily calories at lunch and 20 percent at dinner led to about a 33 percent greater weight loss than eating 50 percent at dinner.

Similarly, restricting calories to a 10-12 hour period may be beneficial for dropping pounds.

Eating breakfast - It's associated with a better blood glucose and insulin balance, which may lower type 2 diabetes and obesity risks.



Bone-Protective Effects of Exercise

Exercise that stresses your bones (weight-bearing exercise) increases bone mineral density and can help preserve bone mass as you age. *But, how?*

- We now know that this type of exercise decreases the levels of a protein that blocks bone formation-and increases the level of a hormone that supports bone formation.
- Examples of weight bearing exercises include walking, tennis, weight lifting or jump training (such as jumping on one or both legs).
- An excellent example of jump training is jumping jacks. And they can be done anytime, anywhere-no special equipment needed!



JUMPING JACKS