



BITES & STINGS



Bites and stings can make your skin red and itchy with swelling that lasts up to 5 days. If you scratch, the area can become infected. **You can have a bad allergic reaction, even if you've never reacted to stings before.** Signs of allergy include hives, flushed skin, itching, feeling sick, fever and trouble breathing. **If you think you're having an allergic reaction, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room at once.**

Stings:



Honeybees usually don't sting but when they do, the stinger and poison sac break free and stay in the skin. Never squeeze the skin or use tweezers to remove a stinger. Flick the stinger with a fingernail or gently use the tip of a credit card until the stinger pops out.



Bumblebees are large yellow and black bees that don't really like to sting. If they do sting, they don't lose their stingers, so they can sting more than once.

Wasps, Hornets, and Yellow Jackets are more likely to sting than honeybees and can sting more than once. In late summer, yellow jackets make up a high number of stings in Indiana. They are often found around trash and food.

Biting Insects:



Biting insects include mosquitoes, fleas and flies. Insect bites are mostly mild and don't hurt as much as stings. Bites can pass on diseases like West Nile Virus and St. Louis Encephalitis.

Non-Insect Bites:



Chiggers are mites, not insects. Their bite can easily be seen, but the mite itself is so small that you may not see it. Chigger bites are found underneath clothing.



Ticks can stay stuck to skin for up to 10 days before dropping off. Ticks spread Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (rare in Indiana) and Lyme Disease. Check your body and hair for ticks after being in wooded places. To remove a tick, hold the body close to your skin and pull slowly and gently. If the tick's head breaks off in your skin, see a doctor. Wash your hands and skin with soap and water after removing the tick.



Spiders: spider bites usually don't cause bad problems for humans. Spider bites are most likely to cause redness and swelling on your skin. This may last for a few days.



Snakes: If a snake bites you, get medical help at once. Rest and don't move the part that was bitten. You may need a tetanus shot. Never cut the skin or try to take out the poison with your mouth.

1.800.222.1222

How to Avoid and Treat Bites and Stings

Avoiding bites and stings:

- If you're outside, pour drinks from cans into cups before you drink to avoid any insects in the can.
- Don't wear bright clothes in the morning and afternoon. Insects are around then and will be drawn to the color. Don't use perfumes or anything else with sweet, fruity or flowery smells.
- Never swat at insects. If an insect thinks you are going to hurt it, it will sting to defend itself.
- Stay away from areas with weeds and blooming plants that bees and wasps like. Always wear shoes outside.

Taking care of bites and stings:

- Wash the skin that was bitten or stung.
- Cool the skin, but don't leave ice on skin for a long time. Take ice packs off every 20 minutes. Let skin warm for five minutes before putting ice packs back on.
- Lift the body part that was hurt to cut down swelling.
- Give Benadryl and acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help pain and itching **if the person who was hurt can safely use them**. Calamine lotion and cool cloths may also help.
- Don't scratch or the skin might become infected.

Anaphylaxis [an-uh-fuh-lak-sis] is caused by allergies to stings and bites. **Anaphylaxis needs to be taken care of at immediately.**

Call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room if a person who is stung:

- Gets a rash or itching over most of their body
- Has trouble breathing
- Feels dizzy
- Feels sick or throws up
- Has chest pain

If you know you're allergic to stings, ask your doctor about an allergy kit to carry.

Insect Repellents

- If you buy something to keep insects away, read and follow all the directions. If you get something that has DEET in it, choose one with less than 10% DEET.
- Do not put bug sprays and creams on children less than 2 years old. Be careful when putting them on older children - don't put any on their hands, it may get into their mouth or eyes.
- If you use repellent, wash it off your skin and change clothes as soon as you go back inside.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants sprayed with repellent or stay inside between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes feed. This will cut down the risk of insect bites.