

The Safety Site

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Bee Stings & Insect Bites

Recreational Safety takes Responsibility & Control

Bee Stings & Insect Bites

For mild reactions: To take care of an insect bite or sting that causes a mild reaction:

- Move to a safe area to avoid more bites or stings.
- If needed, remove the stinger. Scrape it off, don't squeeze it.
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply a cool compress. Use a cloth dampened with cold water or filled with ice. This helps reduce pain and swelling. If the injury is on an arm or leg, elevate it.
- Apply 0.5 or 1 percent hydrocortisone cream, calamine lotion or a baking soda paste to the bite or sting several times daily until your symptoms go away. If you are out in the wild, mud may be your only choice, unless you carry a First Aid Kit.
- Take an antihistamine (Benadryl, others) to reduce itching.

Usually, the signs and symptoms of a bite or sting disappear in a day or two. If you're concerned — even if your reaction is minor — call your doctor.

When to seek emergency care

Call 911 or your local emergency number if the injured person experiences:

- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the lips, eyelids or throat.
- Dizziness, faintness or confusion
- Rapid heartbeat
- Hives
- Nausea, cramps or vomiting
- A scorpion sting and is a child

Take these actions immediately while waiting for medical help:

- Ask the person if he or she is carrying an epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, others) to treat an allergic attack.
- If the person says he or she needs to use an autoinjector, ask whether you should help inject the medication. This is usually done by pressing the autoinjector against the person's thigh and holding it in place for several seconds.
- Loosen tight clothing and cover the person with a blanket. Don't give him or her anything to drink.
- If the person is vomiting, position him or her to prevent choking.
- Begin CPR if the person shows no signs of circulation, such as breathing, coughing or movement.
- *This information is courtesy of the Mayo Clinic.*