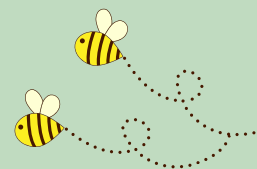




Insect Bites & Stings



Most reactions to insect bites are mild, causing redness, itching, stinging, or minor swelling, and rarely result in severe reactions.

Insect **bites** can result in:

- **Red bumps:** can vary in size
- **Itchy bites:** usually caused by mosquitoes, mites, fleas, and bedbugs
- **Painful bites:** usually caused by horseflies, deer flies, and gnats
 - Fire ants, harvester ants, blister beetles, and centipedes can cause a painful, red bump to form, but within a few hours a fire ant bite can change to blisters

Insect **stings** can result in:

- **Allergic reactions**
- **Pain**
- **Swelling**
- **Redness**

Stings may come from bees, wasps, hornets, or fire ants.

The pain, swelling, redness, and itchiness usually subsides within 1-2 days. Get immediate medical attention for an allergic reaction! (see box below)

Bites vs Stings

A **bite** is when an insect uses its mouth to break a person's skin to be able to feed

A **sting** is when an insect pierces a person's skin and injects their venom

Seeking Medical Attention

Seek **IMMEDIATE** medical attention from an emergency department or call 911 if your child is experiencing an allergic reaction to an insect bite or sting.

Signs of an allergic reaction:

- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Wheezing
- Swelling of the face
- Drooling or slurred speech
- Tightness in the throat



Keep the Bugs Away!

The best way to avoid insect bites and stings is through **prevention**.

Here are some tips:

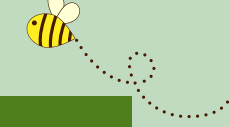
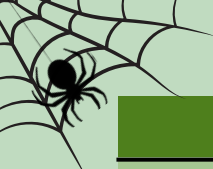
- Wear protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and a hat
- Avoid being outside when insects are most active (i.e. sunrise or sunset)
- Avoid buggy areas, such as still pools, ponds, woody areas with tall grass
- Keep pets free of fleas
- Use insect repellents that contain **DEET** or **Picaridin** in children older than 2 months old:
 - Make sure not to put it near the eyes, mouth, or hands
 - Wash off the area with soap and water when the child comes indoors
 - **DEET** products are to be used on **uncovered skin only**
 - Do not use DEET with concentrations of more than 30%
 - **Picaridin** (i.e. Off! Clean Feel) is **safe** to use on **skin** or **clothing**
 - Picaridin repellent is equal to 10% DEET
- Use products that contain **Permethrin** (i.e. Insect Shield Premium)
 - For **clothing** and **outdoor items**, such as sleeping bags or mosquito screens, use products that have Permethrin
 - Do not use on skin!
- More tips!
 - As the adult, spray repellent on to your hands and then use your hands to apply it to your child's face
 - If going to apply sunscreen as well, always apply the repellent after the sunscreen is applied about 20 minutes later
 - Sunscreen may be reapplied every 2 hours, or as needed, over the insect repellent
 - Do not reapply more insect repellent than the recommended amount by the manufacturer

Contacting the Pediatrician

Contact your child's pediatrician within 24 hours if they show any of the following:

- Severe pain that does not go away within 2 hours of taking pain medicine
- Bite is more red or larger more than 24 hours after the bite
- Has hives or swelling all over
- Bite is draining pus
- Bite was from a tick or spider
- More than 20 fire ants sting a child < 1 year old as seen by clusters of round pus-filled blisters





Managing the Itchiness & the Pain

For an itchy insect bite you can use:

- **Steroid cream** - 1% hydrocortisone cream is available over-the-counter
 - Apply the hydrocortisone 3 times a day until the itch is gone
- **Calamine lotion**
- **Allergy medicine** - use children’s oral diphenhydramine (Benadryl) or oral cetirizine (Zyrtec) if the bite or sting is still itchy; these are available over-the-counter for children **older than 1 year**
- Apply ice cubes in a wet washcloth to the bite or sting for 20 minutes
- A **baking soda paste** can be made by combining 1 tablespoon of baking soda with just enough water until a paste forms
 - Apply the paste to the bug bite for 15-20 minutes before washing the area

For a painful insect bite you can use:

- A cotton ball soaked in **rubbing alcohol**
- A cotton ball soaked in a **baking soda paste**
- **Acetaminophen (Tylenol)** or **ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)** can be used as needed every 4 to 6 hours
- Ice cubes in a wet washcloth for 20 minutes

Tip: Consult with a pharmacist for medication dosing recommendations

Managing Areas with Bug Bites & Stings

Tick Bite

- If you find a tick on your child, use tweezers to grasp the tick firmly at its head as close to the skin as possible, then pull firmly upward until the tick lets go
- **Swab the bite site with alcohol**
- Save the tick in a sealed container and call your child's pediatrician
- Examine clothes, gear, pets
 - Tumble dry clothes in dryer on high for 10 minutes to kill ticks
 - If washing the clothes, use hot water to kill ticks

Mosquito & Ant Bites

- Can use at-home remedies, such as baking soda paste or apply a cool compress to reduce itchiness
- Can apply steroid cream

Spider Bites

- Keep the area raised and immobile to keep the venom from spreading
- Apply antibiotic ointment (such as Neosporin) to prevent infection

Bee & Wasp Stings

- Bees will leave the stinger attached to a venom sac after a sting, while wasps do not
- For a bee sting, remove the stinger with a scraping motion to avoid pinching more venom into the skin
- For either sting, wash the area with soap and water two-three times a day until the skin heals
- Can apply cool compresses for about 10 minutes to reduce swelling and pain
- Can use over-the-counter acetaminophen or ibuprofen as needed every 4 to 6 hours

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