



# Bite wounds and Stings

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There is a full range of reactions to bites and stings. A localized reaction of swelling (less than an inch), is normal. If the swelling extends beyond two joints from the injury, or if the pain is intense and extensive, then it can be an allergic reaction. Other reactions are hives and itching all over. More serious symptoms of sweating, headache, tightness in the chest or throat, wheezing, and dizziness require intervention before 5-10 minutes to abate anaphylactic shock. If a death occurs from an allergic reaction to an insect bite, it usually comes within 15-30 minutes. Pray for the victim and for guidance.

Any generalized symptoms or signs will need further monitoring and care by a medical provider if available. This section assumes a need for local care, especially when a medical facility or personnel are not available or near.

## Animal bites

Human bites are likely to become seriously infected. Wash as thoroughly as possible with water and soap, followed by an antiseptic (iodine) as available, finishing with water. Most wounds will need medical attention.

- Other animal bites can be treated similarly, but the animal should be impounded and tested for rabies. So, a report to authorities is needed. The most common animal bites are from dogs, next come cats, and then rodents.

If it becomes infected, soak the part or use compresses of hot water 4-10 times a day for 30 minutes each time. If not under medical care, now is a good time to obtain help.

## Bees and wasps

The venom injected can be strong acids or alkaline materials. Some people can have sensitivity to the venom that can be quite dangerous. They should carry emergency injection kits. The bite can also introduce infection.

**Wash the wound.** A charcoal wash can detoxify some of the venom that has been injected. Take 2-4 capsules of charcoal immediately. A stinger can be removed by scraping it off with a knife or credit card. There is a fleshy part to a stinger that has more venom in it, so take care not to squeeze it which will express more venom.

Apply a charcoal compress. Stir a few drops of water into a tablespoon of powdered charcoal to make a past, spread on a dressing or paper towel and apply to site. Change every 4-6 hours for 48 hours.

Vinegar is beneficial in the stinging bite of wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets for the first 20 minutes.

Then apply a charcoal compress. Change every 4-6 hours for 48 hours. Baking soda can be used instead of vinegar for pain and to reduce itching.

## Black widow and Brown Recluse

The first evidence of a black widow bite is a sharp pain, swelling and redness in that area. The venom causes extremely severe abdominal pain and muscular tenseness. Other symptoms may include slowing of the heartbeat, feeble pulse, difficulty breathing, inability to void, delirium. Deaths however are rare.

The first treatment is to put the patient or extremity in a tub of very hot water. If the pain goes away, it is confirmation of a black widow bite. Remember to keep the face and neck cool with ice-cold compresses and a small fan directed at the face. The more generalized symptoms require medical attention. There is a black widow serum that can be administered in an ER.

As soon as possible, place a large moist charcoal compress and change every 10 minutes for the first hour, then every 30 minutes for the next 2 hours, then every 2 hours until pain is gone. Administer charcoal slurry of water and 2 tablespoons of powder every two hours until four doses are taken, then drop down to a dose every four hours. Stop when pain is gone.

The brown recluse bites usually are more localized, but may require more wound debridement with the changing of dressings. The bite may not be noticed by the victim until sometime later. There is a toxin that is injected that continues to injure tissue until removed. Start with charcoal compresses as above. After 2 days the wound can be treated with hot water compresses for 30 minutes four times a day until healed. If increasing pain and size of the wound occurs, medical help is necessary for debridement.

## Mosquito and ant

Prevention is a good key here. There are repellants. Some apparel is repellant also. Covering your exposed skin with a powdered detergent can decrease bites. Also a rub of lemon rind can deter mosquitos. Don't forget to coat the shoes with repellant. Wear head coverings.

Onion or black tea bags applied to a site can be helpful. Also vinegar and baking soda or charcoal can reduce irritation. A tub bath can be done with oatmeal or tea tree oil for itching.

## Scorpions

Prompt application of a charcoal capsule immediately to the site, while a compress extending 4 inches beyond the sting is being made using 4-6 tablespoons of powder. Take charcoal capsules or slurry, repeating in an hour as needed. Some meat tenderizer or papaya enzymes can be applied if available immediately, followed by a charcoal compress 20 minutes later.

## Snake bite

300 bites occur in Florida each year. Wearing boots when in the woods reduces the chance of envenomation. Carry a small bottle of charcoal for immediate use. Make a moist charcoal dressing and change every 5 minutes. Seek medical care. Keep the victim cool and quiet.

## Knowledge Check

Circle the correct answer.

1. Some of the important tasks with treating a bite wound are the following
  - Pray for guidance
  - Pray for the victim
  - Assess the situation.
  - Watch for signs and symptoms
  - All of the above
2. What is the most common animal bite in North America?
  - a. Squirrel
  - b. Dog
  - c. Cat
  - d. Human
3. True    False:    A stinger can best be removed with a tweezers
4. True    False:    Rubbing lemon rind on the exposed skin prevents fire ant bites.
5. True    False:    Scorpion bites are not dangerous, so cleaning the wound is enough.
6. Florida has many victims of snake bites. What does good prevention include?
  - a. Wearing boots
  - b. Do not chase or try to catch a snake
  - c. Be observant of where walking
  - d. None of the above
  - e. All of the above
7. One of the best remedies to take with you hiking is?
  - a. TP
  - b. day pack filled with water and first aid guide book
  - c. charcoal capsules and water
  - d. cleansing wipes
8. Most deaths from an allergy to an insect bite or sting are in what length of time?
  - a. 1-2 hours
  - b. 2-5 minutes
  - c. 15-30 minutes

# Bites and Stings

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For course certification, the form must be filled out.

Member Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Member Position Number \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor Position Number \_\_\_\_\_

Member FEMA SID \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor FEMA SID \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_



Recognize the signs and symptoms of a generalized allergic reaction and the likely time of occurrence.



Know the kinds of animal bites and basic treatments.



Recognize possible remedies for flying insect stings or bites.



List the distinguishing signs to a black widow from a brown recluse bite.



Define the immediate first aid to a scorpion sting.



Understand the role of first aid in treating snake bites.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete the knowledge check.

With a complete sheet of initials, the instructor's signature signifies certification of completion for the Bites and Stings course.

Instructor Signature \_\_\_\_\_