



Animal Bites & Stings

Module 12

Bites & Stings

Most insect bites and stings are mild and can be treated at work. They might cause itching, swelling, and stinging that go away in a day or two. Some bites or stings can transmit disease-causing bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Stings from bees, yellow jackets, wasps, hornets, and fire ants might cause a severe allergic reaction see.



Bites & Stings | Mild Reactions

To treat a mild reaction to an insect bite or sting:

- Move to a safe area to avoid more bites or stings.
- Remove any stingers.
- Gently wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply a cloth dampened with cold water or filled with ice to the area of the bite or sting for 10 to 20 minutes. This helps reduce pain and swelling.
- If the injury is on an arm or leg, raise it.
- Apply to the affected area calamine lotion, baking soda paste, or 0.5% or 1% hydrocortisone cream. Do this several times a day until symptoms go away.
- Take an anti-itch medicine (antihistamine) by mouth to reduce itching. Options include nonprescription cetirizine, fexofenadine (Allegra Allergy, Children's Allegra Allergy), loratadine (Claritin).
- Take a nonprescription



Bites and Stings – Treatment Protocol

Call 911 and Public Safety if the patient is having a serious reaction that suggests anaphylaxis, even if it's just one or two signs or symptoms.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Trouble breathing
- Swelling of the lips, face, eyelids, or throat
- Dizziness, fainting or unconsciousness
- A weak and rapid pulse
- Hives
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea



Bites and Stings – Treatment Protocol Cont.

Take these actions immediately while waiting for medical help:

- Ask whether the injured person is carrying an epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, others).
- Ask whether you should help inject the medication. This is usually done by pressing the autoinjector against the thigh and holding it in place for several seconds.
- Loosen tight clothing and cover the person with a blanket.
- Don't offer anything to drink.
- If needed, position the person on their left side to prevent choking on vomit.





Animal Bites | Response Protocol

- Allow the wound to bleed some unless there has been large blood loss, or the wound is bleeding uncontrolled.
- Flush and wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water
- Apply an antibiotic cream or ointment and cover the bite with a clean sterile bandage
- Instruct the patient to seek prompt medical care if:
 - The wound is a deep puncture or you're not sure how serious it is.
 - The skin is badly torn, crushed or bleeding significantly — first apply pressure with a bandage or clean cloth to stop the bleeding.
 - You notice increasing swelling, redness, pain, or oozing, which are warning signs of infection.
 - You have questions about the risk of rabies or about rabies prevention. If the bite was caused by a cat or a dog, try to confirm that the animal's rabies vaccination is up to date. If the bite was caused by a wild animal, seek advice from your doctor about which animals are most likely to carry rabies.
 - Bats often carry rabies and can infect humans without leaving obvious signs of a bite. Therefore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in contact with bats — or even those who are sleeping and awaken to find a bat in the bedroom — seek medical advice about rabies shots, even if they don't think they've been bitten.
 - The patient hasn't had a tetanus shot in the past 10 years — or five years if the wound is deep or dirty. They may need a booster shot.
- Notify Public Safety and the Peninsula Humane Society