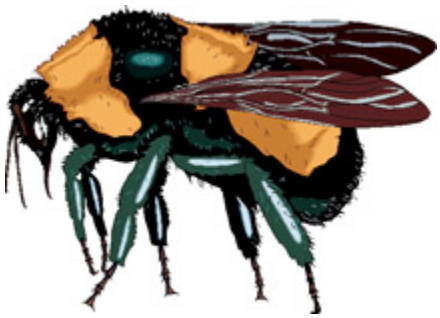
Bee, Wasp, or Hornet Sting

Your caregiver has diagnosed you as having an insect sting. An insect sting appears as a red lump in the skin that sometimes has a tiny hole in the center, or may have a stinger in the center of the wound. The most common stings are from wasps, hornets and bees. On occasion the reactions can be severe (*anaphylactic reaction*). With a severe reaction there may be symptoms of wheezing or difficulty breathing, chest pain, fainting, raised red patches on the skin that itch, feeling sick to your stomach (*nausea*), vomiting, cramping or diarrhea. If you have had one of these severe reactions to an insect sting in the past, you are more likely to have one again.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- With bee stings, a small sac of poison is left in the wound. Brushing across this with something such as a credit card, or anything similar, will help remove this and decrease the amount of the reaction. This same procedure will not help a wasp sting as they do not leave behind a stinger and poison sac, and they can sting multiple times.
- Apply a cold compress for 10 to 20 minutes every hour for one to two days, depending on severity, to reduce swelling and itching.
- To lessen pain, a paste made of water and baking soda, may be rubbed on the bite or sting and left on for 5 minutes.
- To relieve itching and swelling, you may use:
  - Take medication as directed. **DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL OR DRIVE WHILE TAKING MEDICATION.**
  - Hydrocortisone cream may be applied lightly four times per day for a couple days or as directed..
  - Calamine lotion with diphenhydramine may be used lightly on the bite four times per day for itching or as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- If you suffered a severe reaction:
  - If you did not require hospitalization, an adult will need to stay with you for 24 hours in case symptoms (problems) return.
  - You will need to wear a medic-alert bracelet or necklace stating the allergy.
  - You and your family need to learn when and how to use an anaphylaxis kit or epi-pen.
  - If you have had a severe reaction before, always carry your anaphylaxis kit with you. Other family members should also know how to administer this in an emergency.

CALL YOUR CAREGIVER OR THIS LOCATION IF:

- None of the above helps within 2 to 3 days.
- The area becomes red, warm, tender, and swollen beyond the area of the bite or sting.
- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops or as your caregiver suggests, which is not controlled by medication.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE OR CALL EMERGENCY SERVICE IF:

You have symptoms of an allergic reaction which are:

- Wheezing
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Lightheadedness or fainting
- Raised red patches on the skin that itch
- Nausea, vomiting, cramping or diarrhea.

These may be early signs of serious generalized or anaphylactic reactions. Have someone else drive you to the hospital or call for an ambulance.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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